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THE ADROITNESS OF MR. ROOSEVELT

THE public has learned to receive with comparative calm the news that workers in American industries, as decisive for victory as the army itself, have gone on strike or threatened to strike. After coal and steel, the railways are passing through their crisis with more than a million men involved. Like the rest of the world, we are relieved to hear that the President's action will have brought about a settlement. In these disputes a procedure has been established which looks from a distance dramatic and dictatorial, but is in fact a fairly smooth way out of such tangles. In war it provides a prompt solution and leaves little bitterness behind it. The men, or as usually happens, some of them, reject the services of the regular boards of arbitration and defy both the law and, in some cases, their own superior organisations by striking or threatening to strike. Sometimes it has been the employers rather than men who were recalcitrant. The President then intervenes by taking over the plant of the industry, runs it with the aid of the army under military discipline, and then imposes a solution which is always found to be favourable to the men.

This procedure deeply offends American traditions. Some details are ugly: for example, the military rank of colonel is conferred on the managing directors of these railway companies and severe penalties for disobedience are held in reserve. But it does serve two ends. It recognises, however spasmodically and illogically, that these industries, dominated though they are by the profit motive, are in the last resort public services over which the community has sovereignty. Secondly, it allows everyone concerned to yield without loss of prestige. In this instance it is probable that the men will emerge with substantial gains. Overtime rates will be paid for anything in excess of a forty hours' week, where the normal figure had been forty-eight hours; the rate is, moreover, increased by nine cents an hour. This solution is on rather similar lines to those imposed, after brief but regrettable strikes, in the coal mines and steel plants. The letter of the Administration's policy is not infringed: normal wage rates are not increased. None the less, the men's weekly income is considerably increased.

No one who knows anything of the facts will blame the men in these trades for their militancy which was, in fact, little more than a gesture. On the whole, the industrial workers have shown more self-restraint and more regard for the nation's interests than any other group. They consented as a body to the stabilisation of wage rates and kept their bargain long after it was clear that a considerable measure of inflation is inevitable. With the cost of living steadily rising, the level of wages in some trades had become indefensible. The villain in this drama is Congress, which in its turn reflects the ill-will of propertied America towards the President. The men need no economic science to draw the moral from some of the notorious facts. While they agreed to a ceiling on wages, Congress has rendered the control of food prices impossible, by putting its veto on subsidies to agriculture. It has also hampered the policy of the Exchequer at every turn, and thwarted Mr. Morgenthau's attempts to apply in the United States the technique for checking inflation which has, on the whole, succeeded in this country. It would not put a ceiling on salaries, nor would it tolerate any form of compulsory saving. Its latest performance was to throw out all his proposals for higher direct taxation. It has set so ill an example of faction and class-egoism that it would be unreasonable to expect that organised labour will continue to exercise alone the moderation it has shown in the past. These are boom years: labour is in hot demand, and capital can afford to meet its claims. It is probable that wages, limping after the cost of living, will now tend to rise all round, and the spiral of inflation will twist inexorably upwards. Mr. Roosevelt may still do something to check it by the bold use of his executive powers. But in the long run an Administration which cannot carry its taxes against a hostile Congress can hardly hope to stop inflation.

Can the President, by the use of his personal ascendancy and his prestige as Commander-in-Chief, recover anything of his authority? He might for a moment achieve something by a broadcast or a powerful message to Congress. But for the next ten months his authority is likely to touch even lower levels, while the whole political world is absorbed in preparing for the Election in November next. That is normal in the American political time-table. The domestic issues are not easily separated from the debate over foreign policy. Behind the day-to-day struggle over taxes, wages and prices, looms the bigger issue of the survival of the New Deal. The reaction will go as far as it dares in whittling down the new ideal of a positive Welfare State; it will drift back towards *laissez faire*, until one day it is pulled up by the onset of the next slump. The worst omen here is that the President himself seems to have given up the battle. The only way to defend a New Deal is to rouse the ambitions of the Forgotten Man by carrying it farther.

What Mr. Roosevelt intends, no one certainly knows. Probably the task of bringing order to the post-war world will beckon him, as it has beckoned Mr. Churchill, and he will stand again for a further term. It is early to guess whom in that event the Republicans will choose to carry their standard. Mr. Wendell Willkie is no longer what he was last time, "a dark horse," whose asset was his rather naive originality. His record is now fuller and more widely known than that of any of his rivals. He has grown in stature since the previous contest, and he may be in international, but not domestic affairs, as willing to co-operate as the President. Will he, if he is rejected, do as he threatened, split the party and stand like Theodore Roosevelt, as an independent? We doubt it. Failing him, will the party conscript Governor Dewey (who still says he is not a candidate,) or content itself with the even more negative and non-committal Governor Bricker, or plunge by adopting General MacArthur? It is much too soon to guess. Isolationism in the old sense of the word is out of date. But we doubt whether any of the Republicans who look likely really mean, with the exception of Mr. Willkie, to take any perceptible step forward towards world-government. Mr. Dewey having said that he favours an Anglo-American alliance, has since been qualifying this rash utterance. We are left speculating who would stand also for a permanent partnership with Russia, not to mention China. And who, besides Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Willkie, would face any permanent commitments that involved the slightest surrender of sovereignty?

The risk, as most of us realise, is that while

Mr. Roosevelt may score a personal success, he will still have behind him a party which the southern Conservatives dominate. It recently dealt him a heavy blow by rejecting federal legislation which would have enabled the troops to vote. That would have opened the doors of the polling booths to negroes. It is possible that out of these confusions a third party based on the workers, the farmers who used to follow Mr. Wallace, and the younger generation which believed in the New Deal may in the future be born. But it is not easy in wartime, as we know from our own experience, to break with tradition and cut new paths. For to-day we must be content to congratulate the President on an adroit use of his executive powers.

Westwards from Kiev

The rapid progress made in the course of a single week by the new Russian offensive westwards and south-westwards from the Kiev bulge suggests that the enemy must have been taken by surprise. Launched at a time when the Germans may well have thought that the Russians' main effort was being directed into their attack begun a fortnight ago on the Byelo-Russian front, the renewed offensive in the northern Ukraine was admirably timed. Moreover, it was a remarkable military feat to assemble a fresh striking force and pass it through divisions which had withstood for over six weeks the brunt of almost continuous counter-attacks from the German 4th Panzer Army. It seems a fair presumption that this Russian operation is being supported by a much greater weight of armour and artillery than was available when the Kiev salient was originally secured in October. Although General von Hoth's armoured divisions must have been seriously weakened by their fruitless counter offensive, it would be premature as yet to talk in terms of a decisive Russian break-through. Reports from the front speak of heavy soft snow, which is not conducive to rapid movements; and the Russians have still a long way to go before they reach the strategically vital Lvov-Odessa railway. If, however, they can secure the (perhaps now strongly fortified) railway junctions of Byerdichev and Kazatin before the impetus of their attack is checked, they will have succeeded in seriously compromising the supply routes available to the German forces still clinging to the eastern extremity of the Dnieper bend.

Unified Command

Those who have worked in North Africa agree that there Anglo-American co-operation has really been achieved. For the first time in this war something like an integrated staff has been created. This means two things: that the Americans and British do not quarrel about who is nominally at the head and who really does the work, and that Air, Sea and Land act as a unit instead of co-operating as separate forces. This achievement is reflected in the appointment of Eisenhower, the most tactful of generals, to command the Second Front from this country, and Tedder, the most efficient of Air Chiefs, to be his deputy. General Alexander is left with the ungrateful task of continuing to climb up the hard backbone of Italy. General Montgomery's appointment as head of the British Army group under Eisenhower will be more popular with the troops and the general public than with other high-ranking generals.

What Constitution for France?

At the next meeting in Algiers, the Consultative Assembly will discuss a plan for the reconstruction of government in liberated France which is now before the Commission for Legislation and State Reform. There are three parts to the plan: the first deals with the early stages of liberation when little immediate change is projected; the second proposes that when the greater part of France is free, the National Committee should form a provisional government, in conjunction with the supreme council of the resistance groups. Lastly, this provisional government should organise both municipal elections and afterwards the indirect election of a new consultative assembly. It should then resign in favour of a new government nominated by this assembly. It is anticipated that by this time it will be possible to revert to more normal political conditions: a provisional consultative commission is therefore to take the place of the assembly and control the government until new general elections can be held according to the laws of the Republic. Although this plan has several advantages over the original Giraud memorandum of last April (notably the use of municipal councils instead of the old *conseils généraux* as the basis of the indirect electoral system) it still has many weaknesses. Not only does the Left regard the method of indirect election as a bulwark for conservative interests; it is also disturbed by the experience of Corsica where resistance forces had actually taken over the administration before help arrived from outside. Naturally it would be foolish to oppose co-ordination of the new authorities; the alternative would be an anarchy of communes each governed as local sentiment thought fit. But the creation of an inflexible scheme at the present time, when nobody really knows the course the struggle for liberation will take and what conditions will afterwards prevail, may be a source of danger to a renascent France. Some sort of plan for the civil administration of France in the early days of liberation is essential if the sorry story of Amgot is not to be repeated. But the National Committee will be wise not to insist too strongly at the moment upon long-distance schemes.

Smuts on Sovereignty

The reports of the latest speech by General Smuts are too inadequate to admit final judgment. In any event there is little sign in it of fresh constructive thinking. If we understand him correctly, he wants to revive the League as the future organisation of our international life, with only one important change. The Great Powers, among which he now includes China, are to dominate it and take sole charge of everything that concerns security. Is this so great a change? Did not the Great Powers, but more especially Britain and France, dominate the Genevan League? This arrangement would work only in so far and as long as the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and the British Empire remained of one mind. The General insists that the old superstition of sovereignty shall prevail in his new League as it did in the old. That is, to our thinking, to damn it from the outset. If there is no higher incarnation of mankind to which even a Great Power will bow, we are still in the jungle. The worst of all possible ways of creating a superior authority is precisely that on which General Smuts, Mr. Cordell Hull and the Genevans insist so stoutly—the fiction of the equality of all sovereign States. It is patent nonsense to say that Guatemala is the equal of the U.S.A., or Luxemburg of the U.S.S.R. The result of saying it and giving them equal votes, is of course only to discredit all voting. The results are apt to be what happened the other day in U.N.R.R.A.: a decision which seems both to London and Washington mischievous, is carried by the votes of twenty Latin American republics. The old way out—the unanimity rule—simply means that voting is rejected and the Great Powers dominate by their military and economic power. Which is, we take it, what General Smuts wants.

Formosa

The decision reached by the Pacific conference in Cairo to return Formosa to China at the end of the war seems to offer a solution for one of the big problems in Asiatic politics and strategy. It not only means that well-situated bases will be available for any international security force in the future, but also removes the last arguments against the return of Hong-Kong to Chinese sovereignty. This would be in accordance with the spirit of the treaties by which the United States and Britain have surrendered their extra-territorial rights in China. Semi-official Chinese opinion had already made it clear over a year ago that China would be ready to loan bases in Formosa. The conditions were that the island should first be restored unconditionally to the Republic, that reciprocal facilities should be offered by other Powers and that the international police force should be under the control of a body "in no way tainted with balance of power politics." The defeat of Japan and the continuation of the policies implicit in the Teheran declaration appear to satisfy these conditions. The question of Hong-Kong is not quite so straightforward. But the prosperity of this isolated and indefensible British colony has been made possible only by its position as an entrepôt for trade with the Chinese mainland. Not only did it derive ninety-eight per cent of its population from this territory, but it was dependent for its water supply, important military installations and a large part of its industrial facilities on land leased from China. If the security of territories and communications is based upon Formosan ports and aerodromes, the need to maintain Hong-Kong as a base would disappear. No doubt any decision about Hong-Kong will have to wait until it is liberated, but the agreements already reached are a healthy omen of future co-operation in Asia.

Women in the Mines

One of the outstanding social gains in our administration of India during the last decade was the prohibition of women's labour in the coalfields. But it seems that there is a shortage of coal, presumably for industrial purposes, and the prohibition has been cancelled. The women, nearly all of them wives and mothers, work underground. We confront here the central evil of Indian society, the cheapness of human life and labour. Women were held so cheaply that it did not pay to use ponies and until a few years ago not a single conveyor was to be found in these pits. It was rarely that even rails were laid. Women with loads of coal on their heads toiled through the galleries and up steep inclines. All that, we had supposed, had come to an end for ever. But reaction is now the rule in the empire. We are again using women as beasts of burden in these mines, most of them British owned, which have been known in the more fortunate cases, to pay dividends of 100 per cent. in a good year and 80 per cent. over a series of years. It may not be easy in wartime to install machinery. But are no animals available? Men doubtless could be found: but even in times of famine they cost a little more than women. This is one of those social sins for which two generations pay.

"Development Areas"

The Depressed Areas were rechristened as the "Special Areas" before the war, in the hope of making them sound less depressing. And now Dr. Dalton has more hopefully redubbed them "Development Areas," and has told us that the Government is looking for ways and means of providing the diversified light industries of which they will certainly stand in need after the war. He says, too, that the Government is surveying the war's effects on these areas, both with a view to giving them a preference when war production is discontinued, and also in the hope of turning some of the surplus factories into trading or industrial estates. This is, of course, just what ought to be done; but it is difficult to see how it can be done effectively except as part of a wider plan for controlling the location of industry and enlisting State aid in the supply of capital for industrial development. Dr. Dalton said nothing about these wider issues, and dropped no hint concerning the Government's intentions in respect of the location suggestions in the Barlow Report. We hear much in these days about Scott and Uthwatt, but about Barlow nothing at all, except that the Barlow recommendations are obsolete. If they are so, their fault is that they go not too far, but too little of the way; and it is high time to produce something that goes a great deal farther.

CAPTIVES AND EXILES

SINCE the Babylonian captivity has there been in the history of mankind anything that resembled the mass migrations of this war? The wanderings of the Israelites made a legend and a literature; the flight of the Huguenots influenced our own history. But the scale of these recorded parallels is trivial in comparison with what Europe is experiencing to-day. Certainly thirty and more probably forty millions of Europeans have been uprooted from their homes during this war—a population nearly equal to that of France. Some are refugees; some were deported against their will; some were driven to work in Germany; some are the victims of Hitler's crazy fancy to rearrange the ethnographical map of the Continent. The story has now been told in a sober official publication of the I.L.O.* It uses no vivid colours; it handles figures with a bias towards understatement; yet to anyone who reads it with his imagination awake, it is a barely endurable record of wickedness and suffering. If the cinema could picture even a hundredth part of it, the showing of this film in schools would suffice to implant in the rising generation a horror and hatred of war.

With most of the story we have grown familiar as the struggle went on, but the outlines that emerge from this book are sharper than any of us could have drawn unaided. Here, for example, is a careful estimate of the numbers evacuated by the Russians as the enemy advanced—about 12 millions. About half the population of the Russian towns was usually sent eastwards, with as much machinery as could be transported: men predominated over women and children. The peasants were left in their villages.

The most painful story in this Book of Martyrs is, of course, that of the Jews. The total number of those uprooted is estimated at about four millions. Reading the narrative as it is told here, it seems possible that a slightly larger number of European Jews may escape extermination than is commonly supposed. After the Jews the most tragic story is that of the Poles. Broadly, in their ruthless megalomania, what the Nazis proposed to do was to clear the entire Polish population out of the Corridor and the eastern province we used to know as Posen, and pack it with the deported Jews into central Poland—the old Duchy of Warsaw. At the same time the German minority of eastern Poland, mostly peasants, were transplanted to the western region—a complicated criss-cross pattern. The Nazis began with the intention of doing the job thoroughly. "Whosoever belongs to the Polish people must leave this land," as Gauleiter Forster put it in a public speech. "We hope that in this struggle for the triumph of our German cause we shall never become merciful, that we shall always show the necessary harshness." If the scheme of colonisation failed, mercy was not to blame for it.

Thousands of Polish peasant families were expelled, sometimes with no more than twenty minutes' notice. From farm and homestead all they might carry away was the contents of a suitcase. On half-a-dozen counts, so elastic that they would fit any case, they were expropriated without compensation. Thousands of Germans were brought in to take their place. But after the first period of enthusiasm the process of expulsion slowed down and stopped. Peasants, even Polish peasants, have their uses: they grow food. It was only the Polish intellectuals who were driven out without mercy; the majority of the peasants remain on their little holdings to this day. The other reason for the failure of this policy of colonisation was that the imperative call of the military machine sent Germans elsewhere, and chiefly to the Russian Front. The idea next in favour was to use the Dutch and other Nordics to colonise the conquered Russian provinces. A Netherlands East Company was founded to finance this adventure, and it was proposed that three million Dutch settlers should be planted there. Only a few were trapped; they were sent to act as slave-drivers on the collective farms. Some got as far as Kharkov and the Kuban country—for a time.

The same causes happily prevented the complete fulfilment of the grandiose scheme invented for breaking up the compact national home of the Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia. To be sure, enough was done to render homeless tens of thousands of Czech families and to earn for the Germans the enduring hate of this nation—a people commonly slow to wrath. Some 200,000 Germans were settled in the city of Prague, while round it a "Germanic Iron Circle" was drawn, which means that the Czech peasants were expelled from the land and Germans settled in their place. But, happily, as in Poland, this scheme was never completed. The Czech farmer also has his uses, and there were other things for the *Herrenvolk* to do—more especially after "the crowning mercy" of Stalingrad.

Perhaps the strangest part of this story is that which describes the equally ruthless pranks that Hitler played with the master race. The *Drang nach Osten* was an instinct long before it was a policy. Little colonies of Germans, most of them old-world peasants, rather slow, rather pious and militantly clean, are to be found scattered all over Eastern Europe, from the Baltic to the Ægean. We knew one of them settled in the beauty and fertility of the Vale of Tempe. In the shadow of Olympus it still retained among its olives and vines its northern character. Hitler's strategy was to withdraw all these distant outposts. And so from Bulgaria, Rumania and Volhynia they have trekked back to the homeland their ancestors quitted long ago. Their peasant physiology is evident from their vital statistics; all of them have a high percentage of children and a low percentage of the aged. Was it to save them from Bolshevism that Hitler withdrew from the Baltic States the German colonies which once gave to the armies and civil service of the Tsars some of their ablest officers? Their historic role, in any case, was over. So we had felt when last we encountered them at Tallinn, in Esthonia. It once was known as Reval, the remotest of the old Hansa cities. Still on the hill in the centre of the town, the German colony held together in isolation. No language but its own was heard in the streets or in its theatre and its stiff old Lutheran church. Its buildings, gaunter and poorer than those of Danzig or Lübeck, were in the same Hanseatic style. But it had been cut off from the soil when the new Republic gave its lands for a song to its repressed Esthonian tenantry. Obviously, it was dying, for its statistics show a minimum of children and a maximum of the aged. Indirectly, Hitler also must be held responsible for the ill fate that has befallen the Germans of the Volga Republic. They were originally Baptists, of the harmless pacifist sect known as Mennonites. After two centuries of persecution in the West, Catherine the Great gave them an asylum on the Volga. Lenin favoured them, for they were good farmers, and gave them autonomy in a soviet republic of their own. But now, lest they should be tempted to form a "fifth column," they have been driven, to the number of 400,000, to the ends of the earth, to start life over again in Siberia.

Mr. Kulischer, at the end of his poignant chronicle, draws some morals to which most of us will assent. Once more, when the war ends, the general post will be resumed in the reverse direction. The Germans brought into Alsace-Lorraine will have to quit; the expatriated French will return. Afoot, on bicycles, and in cattle trucks, exiles and deportees, prisoners and workers will make for their homes. To organise these new migrations with a minimum of suffering will call for the services of some powerful international agency, whether U.N.R.R.A. or the I.L.O. But of the refugees many will wish to stay where they are: in reason we agree that this country should give them a home—more especially if they served in the Forces or in the war effort. Much will depend on the liberality of the New World in opening its gates. But we may expect in the future an even bigger development of migration in search of work within Europe. It ought to be organised, as this book suggests, by an international employment service. This looks like a job for the I.L.O. For our part we would like to see a general charter adopted for these migrants, securing to them the same rights and standards that indigenous workers enjoy.

In our minds, after reading this tragic book, yet another moral took shape. We want to see no more of these migrations. At the best, when a population is torn up by the roots from land which its ancestors have tilled for centuries, it means a painful emotional dis-orientation: it usually means, as in most of these cases it did, economic ruin, epidemic disease, and heavy mortality as well. Some cases will call for careful study—that of the South Tyrol, for example. Do we again wish to give the Italians the strategic control of the Brenner Pass, and, if so, shall we permit them to go on forcibly Italianising this indisputably Austrian population, even to the extent of changing the German names of their ancestors on the tomb-stones? The rights of the Slav peoples round Trieste and Fiume demand some much better arrangement than the present. It is conceivable that in one single instance we should not upset what the Axis did—the division of Transylvania between Hungary and Rumania. But our own plea is for conservatism in the matter of frontiers. The aim should rather be to render frontiers unimportant by the development of international organisation and planning across them, with the standardisation of personal rights.

We want as few changes of frontiers as possible, because in our age of iron they have come to mean the mass expulsion of settled populations. That, for instance, is what the Poles talk of, when they propose to annex East Prussia, the Danzig territory, and both Upper and Lower Silesia. But do they—or the Soviet Union—really mean to uproot a solidly Germanic population, numbering over seven millions? Poland's claims were carefully weighed after the last war, with Mr. Wilson and the Tiger as her warm partisans, and after the taking of plebiscites, liberally satisfied. Whenever the Poles, who have suffered incredible wrongs, demand compensation that will diminish human misery, we shall be the first to back them. But is it not capital rather than new territory they need, machines and especially industrial machines rather than acres? There we think they have a claim not merely for such recompense in kind as Germany can pay, but also for British and American aid. Losses, as far as possible, should be equalised among allies. Again, we would support every reasonable proposal for guaranteeing Polish security. But the form of compensation which civilised minds will decidedly reject after reading this book is the needless uprooting of further millions from their ancestral homes. Of these millions the overwhelming majority are workers and small peasants who were themselves helpless under the Nazi terror. In another form the same question arises, when the Czechs talk of expelling their German population, which numbers over three millions. Of course, those who joined the Nazis in active terrorism will have to go; most of them will probably flee if they are not killed first. No doubt it is right that the Sudeten Germans should be asked to opt for one nationality or the other and take the consequences. But to adopt indiscriminate expulsion would be to fall into the very practices that Hitler brought into vogue. There is much loose talk about "exchanges of population": the phrase rings fair. But in these instances there is no possibility of an exchange. There were no Polish or Czech populations in the pre-war Reich which could be exchanged. The packing of ten million additional Germans into a greatly reduced area would be among the most reckless and explosive measures we could adopt. This book is a monumental record of what civilised men will wish to avoid.

* *The Displacement of Population in Europe.* By EUGENE M. KULISCHER. The I.L.O. Montreal. 4s.

IS KILLING A PLEASURE?

DURING the last few months several articles have appeared in the Press dealing with personal experiences of snipers and guerrilla fighters. Among them was one entitled "I like killing Germans," by Lieutenant Ludmila Pavlichenko, a Russian woman sniper, who claims to have shot over 300 Germans and enjoyed it. Now I am definitely sure that if you take ten guerrillas and asked them whether they like killing their enemies, nine would reply negatively. Because, in spite of whatever is said about human nature and its lust for killing and destroying, a normal person cannot enjoy taking life. One does it when in danger or in emotion, but even then it's far from being a pleasure.

This opinion is based not only on conversations with those who spent many months in guerrilla fighting and skirmishes in Poland, but also on my own experiences.

My first "kill" happened on September 4, 1939. Being an officer of the reserve and mobilised, I was then in command of a small signal unit, attached to one of our armies near Rzeszow in southern Poland. Soon after an air raid warning, word came that enemy parachutists had been dropped not far from our positions. We found out this was true when shots began to ring and men fell here and there. They were all rounded up within two hours, all except one, whose whereabouts nobody could ascertain. In half an hour he killed all four men operating the radio station and kept firing from time to time at anybody who showed as much as a finger. By a lucky chance, one of my men saw the German fire from a barn but was killed by his next shot. Lying in a ditch I was able to crawl the distance unseen, creep around and enter the barn from the other end. In the first moment, I couldn't see him, but his fire again gave him away. Lying comfortably in a pile of hay, he fired through the spaces between logs without showing so much as an inch of his muzzle outside. He didn't see or hear me, so I fired two shots at him. He turned round, into a half-sitting position, taking aim at me, so I fired once more. He fell on his back, yelled something and then rolled down to the ground. I went away without looking at him. I couldn't. He was the first man I killed.

During the next ten days, we were driven very hard by German armoured columns and infantry and had to retreat eastward. Several times we were cut off and had to shoot our way out. Man for man, every one of us had to fight and kill—for his own life. And there was no time to dwell on the subject. One either had to surrender to those who for ages have been our enemies—or kill—to avoid being captured, and to get through.

I had no thoughts on that subject at the time. I just picked one of them, kept him in the sights and waited till he came near enough for me to see his face, and then fired somewhere into his middle. Approaching with a gun in his hand and in a bent forward position, he usually fell on his face. And all I could feel at such moments was being glad that it wasn't I lying there in the dirt. Even now, after nearly four years, I feel no emotion when I think about the Germans I shot there in the fields and hills of southern Poland. Neither do I feel proud.

But these, and others, when I was in the defence of Lwow, were kills at a distance. Not a great distance, but all I had to do was to pull the trigger. It's quite different when you feel the flesh of your enemy under your fingers or knife! This happened later.

After nearly two weeks of incessant bombing and shelling of Lwow, having no more ammunition and no hope, we decided to have our last go at the Germans. Eight of us, with grenades, knives and revolvers, went out in an attempt to get the crew of a German mortar battery. But we ran into ambush before we managed to do anything. Knocked against a tree by the explosion of several grenades thrown at us simultaneously, I awoke to find myself badly shaken and in company of three other of my men, all wounded, and under German guardianship. The rest were killed. I was taken to a nearby village of Skolimow and next morning put before a German court-martial and sentenced to be shot. The sentence was, however, postponed for eight days, during which I was cross-examined, and it was decided that I should be shot on the Monday morning.

There were eighteen of us locked in a barn, around which sentries were posted. We could see them through spaces between logs. We noticed, during the week, that as the nights grew old, sentries became rather quiet, perhaps fell asleep. We decided to escape.

In the straw on which we lay, we found a bayonet, left there perhaps by some soldier in the earlier days of war. With this, a stick and our hands, we dug beneath the wall, as quietly as possible, until we had a hole big enough for a man to slip through. Trying to steady my legs which were trembling, I crawled in and put my head out.

It wasn't a dark night. A piece of moon was peeping through the leaves of a willow. About three yards away, sitting with a rifle across his legs and a big revolver in his hand, was the sentry—apparently sleeping. I pulled myself out, but broke the edges of the hole and the sound of falling grit woke him. Before he realised what was happening, I was on top of him and at his throat.

It was an awful job. I don't know why, or how, but my mind worked clearly all the time. I could feel the muscles in his throat moving under my fingers and saw deadly fear in the whites of his eyes. On my face I felt a few bursts of his breath mixed with saliva, which still managed to escape from under my hands, and I knew that I must kill him, choke him to death, if I was to be free and alive. So I put all my strength into the grip, but he still struggled. Then all at once he gave a shiver and relaxed. It was the bayonet which the man after me had put into him. I released my grip and he fell to the ground, blood pouring from his mouth. The whole struggle, which may have lasted a minute or less, created some noise and we took to the woods.

Hearing no search after us, we waited all day till the next night came and then, cautiously, avoiding roads and villages, headed north. In a few days we reached Tarnawatka, a village some 60 kilometres north, where from a peasant we learned that there was a group of Polish guerrillas under Colonel Tomaszewski operating in the forests. He himself was going to join them and was willing to act as a guide.

For three weeks, in small groups, we played hide and seek with the Germans, ambushed their patrols, built obstructions for their cars, shot the occupants, made raids on ammunition stores and slept in forests, barns or ditches.

And again, it was a question of patience, steady nerves and hands. There was time to think about it, too. Many a time, lying with a gun near a path down which a German patrol was bound to come, I thought, within half an hour or more, I shall probably kill a man, the same kind of being as I am, but whose ideas on living are different. A man, who with thousands of others like him, invaded our country, killed so many of our people, and would kill me too, given a chance, and that's why I'm going to kill him, though I should much prefer another solution. And when the time came, I fired and killed—but I didn't like it.

But in one instance, I was very glad and rather happy to have shot a German. Not because if I hadn't I would have been shot myself—that realisation came later—but because it was a hard job. And though it may sound trivial to use that expression in the serious business of killing, it turned into a sort of sporting match between us two—and I won.

In Lublin Voyevodship we got the news that a German supply column would pass south. This being a much wooded part of the country, we had no difficulty in preparing an ambush on the road. Several trees were partly sawn, so as to fall on the road after a slight pull of the ropes or a hand grenade explosion. We took our positions, let the motor-cyclists through for our men down the road to take care of and waited for the convoy about half a mile behind.

I was given a look-out job at the end from which the Germans were coming, to raise alarm if help should be coming for them and to stop those who would try to run back.

A small convoy appeared. Only two of the trees fell on the road but that was enough to stop them. The motor-cyclists, I was told later, were the first to be killed, and the rest in confusion fired in every direction, ran into the woods straight into our guns. Two ran back, one fell but the other kept on towards me. And though it was only fifty to sixty yards—I missed. He saw me and before I could fire again, jumped into a ditch. From there he threw two grenades. I replied with shots whenever he showed an inch above the ground, but missed each time, being unable to take good aim. Four of his bullets came uncomfortably near, throwing earth and sand into my face. The fifth ricochetted from a stone with an unpleasant whine.

I realised that the fight with the convoy was over, heard my group moving away, but couldn't withdraw myself; neither could he. We had to shoot it out.

I called out to him in German, but all I got back was a dirty name and another grenade which fell short. I knew I couldn't wait there long, for some of them would be bound to come down the road soon. I tried to shoot off, and upon him, a telegraph pole, but had to give it up as requiring too many rounds.

There was some dry grass in my hole, a few dry sticks and plenty of leaves. The breeze was in the right direction. I made a small bunch of sticks, leaves and grass, set fire to it and threw it into the leaves ahead of me. This brought more shots from the German, but before he realised what was happening, hidden by smoke, I was out of my hole and behind a big pile of cut wood which gave me a good aiming position. I got him with my next shot and then went over to see him. He was about twenty-three, ginger-haired, good-looking. The bullet had entered his right shoulder passed through his chest and torn a big piece out of his left side. He had a surprised expression on his face.

It took me two days to rejoin my group who had given me up for dead.

In another encounter, a bullet grazed the top of my head. Nothing serious but enough to lose consciousness and get into German hands again. Why they did not shoot me on the spot I never learned. I was sent by car to Krasnystaw, and there included in a batch of prisoners which was marched off to Lublin.

We arrived on a dark night and had to wait several hours in the market place. It happened that I sat on a grating over a sewer. It was dark, sentries were posted at the entrances to the market place, so without being seen, except by prisoners, two of us lifted the cover, went in and the others replaced it.

After about an hour, the prisoners were marched off. We waited for a while, then with some difficulty lifted the cover and got out. We were unable to stand owing to the cramp which paralysed our muscles, so we crawled and rolled, luckily without being seen, into the nearest yard. There we lay massaging our legs, and before morning, through backyards and alleys, disappeared into the woods again.

I had my family in Warsaw, the other man a sister in Gydnia, so we decided to go and see them, having heard nothing from them since war started. In Warsaw, during the next few weeks, hunted by Gestapo and seeing how they treated my people, I learned to hate them as only a Pole can hate a German.

There was one whom I am sorry to have killed.

It was early spring, 1940. I was trying to get out of Poland to join the Polish Army in France. With a friend, I decided to cross the frontier to Hungary. To save our legs from crossing the Carpathian Mountains, we smuggled ourselves on a freight car. Next morning, the sun came up, and tired of sitting in a cramped position, we pulled aside the canvas cover to stretch and get

some warmth. The German guard saw us. He didn't fire; just walked along the planks to our truck and started threatening us with handcuffs. We pushed him over the side and he fell on the buffers. There he hung, yelling, so I had to kick his hands off. He fell under the wheels and was crushed. I can still remember the look on his face. I hate it.

Now, from England, I am engaged in a peaceful job of bringing food and guns across the Atlantic. But often at sea, when I recall the bloody times in Poland and my experiences there, I am again sure that a normal man or woman will never enjoy killing another. And if what Ludmila Pavlichenko said of herself was true, it is not true of all of us.

FRANCISZEK RADZISZOWSKI

THE BENGAL FAMINE

[*The author of this article has long experience of India and has only recently returned from that country.*]

THE recent famine in Bengal affords an unhappy illustration of what may happen when a Government neglects some simple economic facts. The mistakes, which were mainly responsible for the disaster, are discernible from the narrative of events given by Sir Azizul Huque, the Food Member, in his speech to the Central Assembly in Delhi on August 9th (printed as part of the White Paper). But they appear in this country—though not, of course, in India—to have escaped notice.

These mistakes dogged the footsteps of the Government of India right from the autumn of 1941, when the price of wheat first began to rise steeply. This rise was not primarily due to inflation, as at that time the general price level was still only rising slowly. The price of wheat was shooting up out of relation to other prices. As early as October the Government of India began to consider fixing the price. But when in December they did fix it, to everyone's astonishment it turned out that they had absolutely no plans ready for obtaining control of the supplies; in fact it was not till several weeks after the price had been fixed that they selected and appointed a Wheat Controller. Apparently they were under the impression that they had only to pass an order fixing the price and that everything else would take care of itself. Naturally enough all visible stocks began disappearing into the black market. Some district officers, acting on their own initiative, quickly commandeered stocks of wheat and thus ensured that until the next spring harvest supplies would be available for the poorer classes of the urban population at the fixed price. But no proper organised attempt was made to do this in the country as a whole. Indeed, as will be shown later, right up to the time of the recent disaster the Government of India at best made only a half-hearted effort to secure control of supplies, and for most of the time no effort at all.

Failure to recognise that control of price required control of supplies was the first obvious mistake of the Government of India. Their second main error was no less remarkable. The original steep rise in the price of wheat in the autumn of 1941 was attributed by the Government of India to "speculative activities." But the speculators were not speculating without any basis of sense or reason. They had good reason for anticipating an excess of demand over supply. Yet right on into the middle of January the Wheat Controller went on insisting that stocks were ample. By February this had become plainly untrue. Hoarding was then blamed. But the hoards could not be found, and did not in fact exist to any great extent. During February and March considerable shortage was felt in many parts of the country, and when the new harvest began to arrive in April there was no carry over.

It was pointed out to the Government of India that, in calculating the demand, they ought to add anything from 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. to the normal figures of consumption. Owing to the stimulus given to industry by the war there was less unemployment; everywhere labourers were getting better and more regular wages. As they are normally undernourished, with more money in their pockets they were bound to consume more. Similarly the peasants were finding that with the rising prices they could meet their land revenue and other fixed charges by disposing of less of their produce. They would therefore tend to keep more and to eat more. During the recent discussions these factors have been referred to as though they were new discoveries. Certainly they had not previously been mentioned by Government spokesmen. They were in fact operative and obvious away back in the early months of 1942.

But the Government of India took no account of them. Throughout 1942 they continued to proclaim that there was no real shortage. "No real shortage but only difficulties of distribution" became the slogan, and it went on being repeated by Mr. Amery well into 1943. Yet by the summer of 1942 it had already become more than ever obvious that the shortage was real. The occupation of Burma by the Japanese meant the loss of the Burma rice, and the growing intensity of the submarine campaign did not suggest that this could be made good by supplies from elsewhere. It was a commonplace of text-books—though apparently overlooked by the Government of India—that without Burma India was not self-supporting in food grains. This was confirmed by the most recent figures. For the four years 1937–38 to 1940–41 the average net imports of the principal food grains was no less than 1,220,000 tons. In 1941–42 net imports fell to 431,000 tons—this fall, be it noted, coinciding with the first sharp rise in the price of wheat. In 1942–43, with the loss of Burma, net imports had become a minus quantity. Hence, even without making any allowance for increased consumption there was an imminent prospect of a definite shortage.

In these circumstances it was more than ever necessary for Government to secure a tight control of available supplies. Only so could they hope to prevent soaring prices and ensure equitable distribution.

They did nothing of the kind; on the contrary they discouraged efforts in this direction. Several Provincial Governments, and even some district officers, foreseeing the shortage, purchased considerable stocks of food grains. The Government of India objected to this on the ground that it would create an "artificial shortage." But when a real shortage was to be anticipated its effects could only be mitigated by public authorities holding as large stocks as possible. Furthermore, the mere fact that the Government of India were continuing to control the price of wheat required that control should be obtained over supplies to the maximum extent. But the Government of India persisted in their policy of doing nothing except fix the maximum price of wheat. Even a proper Food Department was not created.

As was to be expected, quite soon after the spring harvest of 1942 wheat became unobtainable at the fixed price. It was notorious that Government's own agents, buying for the army, were paying more than the maximum of Rs.5 per maund. By December, 1942, the Government of India, finding themselves in a hopeless tangle, decontrolled the price, which immediately shot up to Rs. 12. They also at long last set up a Food Department.

It was during this year of aimless drifting that the foundations of the subsequent disaster were well and truly laid. Precious months, which might have been used to build up a proper organisation for large-scale procurement of supplies, were wasted. The preparation of ration schemes was neglected, although with the imminent prospect of supply being unequal to demand, rationing was bound to be necessary. Again it was left to the initiative of individual provinces and individual district officers to make a beginning with such schemes.

The new Food Department set to work to make plans for the spring harvest of 1943. It was at last recognised that there must be some Government agency for procuring stocks. In exact contrast with the previous year, Provincial Governments were now urged to bring the maximum stocks of food grains under Government control. This was a step in the right direction. But even now the Government of India only took half-measures. The general scheme was that the Governments of the surplus Provinces should "procure" their surpluses and make them available for the deficit Provinces. Movement of food grains from one Province to another was only to take place under Government orders. This was sound so far as it went. But the growers, especially after their experience of the previous year when wheat rose from Rs. 5 at the beginning to Rs. 12 at the end, were likely to be sticky about parting with their produce. It was not, therefore, safe for Government just to employ ordinary trading methods, and enter the market as one buyer among many. It might not be possible by these means to acquire substantial stocks. Moreover, competitive buying would increase the tendency of prices to rise. Elimination of competition and compulsory acquisition by Government at a fixed price were required. But the Government of India would not hear of this. They allowed competitive buying, they refused to fix prices and they set their face against compulsory purchase. They said that they relied on ordinary trading methods both for procuring stocks and for keeping down prices. How, in face of a demand in excess of supply, they expected by "ordinary trading methods" to keep down prices was never revealed and has remained a mystery.

The inevitable occurred. Prices being uncontrolled, wheat rose in deficit areas to over Rs.30. During April, May and June the Government of India, instead of receiving 1,450,000 tons from surplus Provinces, for distribution to deficit Provinces, received only 570,000 tons. By May the situation in the deficit Province of Bengal, had become extremely critical; and the Government of India, owing to their continuously faulty policy, were in possession of insufficient stocks to afford relief. They now plunged about in desperation. In May they abandoned in the eastern zone their procurement plan and permitted complete Free Trade. In July they abandoned Free Trade and reverted to the procurement plan. But no chopping and changing could now save the situation. The fruits of nearly two years mismanagement had to be reaped.

The primary responsibility for the disaster rests on the Government of India. A not very dignified attempt has been made to shift it on to the Provincial Governments. It is true that in December, 1942, the Bengal Government were more optimistic about their position than subsequent events showed to be justified. But the Government of India apparently accepted their estimates. In any case, owing to their previous mistakes, the Government of India could not have prevented disaster. For, having spent 1942 refusing to make Government purchases, in December they were in possession of no stocks, and, the new procurement plan propounded by the Food Department early in 1943 was a half-measure, which could not ensure adequate stocks at reasonable prices.

Several people have sought to excuse the Government of India on the ground that they had to deal with a number of autonomous Provincial Governments to whom it was not proper in these matters to issue definite orders. This defence must necessarily appear to Indian critics somewhat disingenuous; for in only four out of eleven Provinces was Provincial autonomy still functioning; and in two out of these four Indian Provinces, Governments which had not been defeated in the legislature had recently been got rid of by the Governors. Moreover, constitutionally the Government of India had full power in such an emergency to issue orders to Provincial Governments. This had been provided by an amendment of the Government of India Act 1935, passed through Parliament on the outbreak of war. And, of course, when India's available supplies of food grains were insufficient to meet the demand, it was just plain common sense that only the Central Government could tackle the problem and that they should

employ all the powers at their disposal. It was not powers but understanding that the Government of India lacked.

The question remains, what were the Secretary of State and the India Office doing during the two years while the Government of India were so manifestly heading for disaster? This question was asked in the House of Commons by Sir George Schuster and received no reply. One can only conclude that they were doing nothing.

It is a melancholy record. There are, however, now two consoling features. The Food Grains Policy Committee have in their report of September, 1943, at last laid down sound principles. Failure to secure adequate control over supplies is recognised as one of the principal errors of the past; and proper measures are being taken to remedy it.

The other consoling feature is the promptness with which Lord Wavell has acted. He appears already to have infused a new vigour and spirit into the administration. And the sentiments expressed by him on his first visit to Calcutta were wholly admirable. "I have not come to criticise or to affix responsibility but only to alleviate immediate distress."

A LONDON DIARY

I UNDERSTAND that the Labour Party Executive has now chosen four people to go to Moscow. The names given me are Harold Laski, Percy Collick, Arthur Dobbs and Alice Bacon. The proposal is for them to go to Russia, taking with them fourteen topics for discussion. The main object, of course, is for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and British Labour to set up an international body (consultative, not executive). Other national organisations may join as they become free to do so. The matters for discussion include a promise that each Party should do its best to prevent any interference with any Socialist movement abroad, and that each should rally to the other's support internationally in case of attack. There would be pledges not to interfere with each other's internal affairs and discussions of future cultural co-operation. There are proposals to facilitate the interchange of teachers and students and for the translation and distribution of books.

* * *

A most interesting report reaches me that Moscow now agrees that it is time to study post-war collaboration, and that a new body has been set up under the aegis of Molotov and the Russian Foreign Office. It is good to hear that Litvinov and Maisky are to have an important part to play in this work.

* * *

If Antonio Torres had been sacked by the B.B.C., I suppose the press would have taken the matter up. But the authorities have been smarter than that; I hear that he has only been "taken off the air." He was the B.B.C. star broadcaster to Spain, and inquiry would show that not for the first time British radio policy to Spain has been modified in deference to protests by Sir Samuel Hoare. Torres was a vivid broadcaster who is believed to have built up a large public in Spain. He did not attack Franco, but Sir Samuel did not like his intonation and the things he said "between the lines." His last broadcast was after the Portuguese had given facilities to the British in the Azores. Torres praised Salazar in contrast with Franco.

* * *

John Pudney's statement that after careful inquiry in Italy he was unable to discover any evidence of German atrocities there has produced, as might be expected, two types of letter. There is the lady who promptly writes to say that of course all atrocity stories are inventions, as they were in the last war. Then there are two ladies (one of whose letters was published in this journal last week) who write quoting letters from soldiers describing atrocities. What is the truth? I should summarise the situation like this. (1) Cases of rape and individual brutality occur on every battlefield and are commited by every army. There is always some evidence of atrocities. (2) The lady (whose letter was not published) should make further inquiries before she quotes a letter saying that the breasts of a woman who had been raped were cut off with garden shears. Did the witness find the shears or how did he know? Children with their hands cut off featured as propaganda in the last war. No child was ever produced, and, as far as I know, no such child exists in this war either. (3) While the Nazis have generally observed the Hague Convention in fighting against the British, no Convention, indeed, as one of the men hanged at Kharkov said, no laws of any sort seem to operate on the Russian front. The evidence that large numbers of civilians have been rounded up and shot by the Germans and that innumerable acts of barbarism have been committed on the Eastern front seems fully substantiated. I do not depend on Russian official statements or the confessions of the Kharkov trials. There is unfortunately every reason to assume atrocities from the fact that the Germans have declared their intention to enslave the Poles and Russians. Their theory is that Slavs are sub-human and that their territory should be colonised by Nordics. Further, the German armies meet large-scale guerilla resistance, which must mean that in any case, for military reasons, they would wish to destroy Polish and Russian villagers. If you turn young Nazis imbued with this *Hetzenvolk* doctrine loose upon people whom they are told are sub-human and to be completely enslaved, and if these slaves show signs of fight, wide-scale massacre and atrocities are inevitable. The Nazis want Russia's food, and intend to colonise Soviet and Polish territories. Exactly the same results followed in the United States when white men with the same doctrine and the same desires destroyed the American Indians whose land they wanted, and one could quote parallel cases from various parts of the British Empire. The present generation of Germans, however, appear to be particularly well trained in brutality, and there is no case of atrocities on this scale against another white people. There are two pieces of confirmatory evidence. One is that the German papers published accounts of Germans who are severely punished for showing consideration to Slav prisoners, and the other that captive Germans express terror at what will happen to them when they recall what their troops have done in occupied territory.

* * *

Once the difference between the two wars Germany is fighting is understood there is nothing surprising in the German threat to discover and try "war criminals" among British and American prisoners of war in Germany. Presumably Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt agreed at Teheran to the Russian proposals to begin the trial of German war criminals before the conclusion of hostilities. After all, the Germans were likely to reply by an attempt to put the squeeze on the British and Americans, since they already treat Russian prisoners of war so bestially that no further threat to them could mean anything. The Germans argue that the Russian executions are merely lawless reprisals. In support of their view they can quote copiously from British newspapers and from the Prime Minister who condemned previous Russian trials in which, they assert, the very same defending Counsel took part. In these trials the real examination is in secret, and only those who have already confessed are publicly "tried". Criticism of this type of justice is valid and proper. It is the popular justice that belongs to a revolutionary period and that gives way to a better system when greater stability is obtained. In the meantime the British and Americans are presented with an awkward problem. They do not say so publicly, but privately informed opinion must be that it would be a ghastly tragedy if the prisoners of war code (generally observed so far by both German and Allies in the West), were ended and the war in the West became as purely savage as it is on the Eastern front. The suggestions I have heard are (1) that the Germans will not in fact carry out threats that carry such dangerous implications to themselves, or, if they do, that war must simply go on becoming more and more savage, and that's all there is to it. (2) That all war criminal trials should be postponed till after the war; or (3) that some counter-threat, e.g., the trial of judges who acted in any trial of captured airmen should be made at once. I don't believe in these counter-threats. That road only leads to final perdition. After indiscriminate bombing, then gas; after gas, then bacteriological warfare. And then? Straight mass suicide would seem indicated.

* * *

The "ideological" aspect in this war is now more pronounced in Yugoslavia than it has been at any time in Europe since the formation of the International Brigade. Not only have the Germans used mixed divisions of Croats, Serbs, Italians and members of German minority groups, but I hear that they have also brought quisling units from France and Belgium into action against the partisans. One would expect to find troops from Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania used for police purposes, but the crowning example of my point is the presence of a division of Russian Whites. And the partisans, now aided by Anglo-American and also by Soviet advisers, are an equally curious assortment of peoples. Besides the Serb, Slovene and Croat units there are separate divisions for Moslems, Montenegrins and Macedonians. The Garibaldi division is composed of anti-Fascist troops and recruits from the Italian minorities on the Dalmatian coast. A similar German formation exists as well as Czech, Bulgar and Hungarian units. When the Allies go farther into Europe this sort of thing is likely to become even more common. Neither war nor politics stop at the old frontiers nowadays.

* * *

Time: Christmas. Scene: a 'bus crowded with tired workers and a few victims of the squander bug. Enter noisy child and harassed mother. The only two seats vacant are one behind the other on the gangway side. Child is fidgety. He wants a slice of apple; he wants a sweet. Finally, after his mother has made various futile attempts to suppress him, he cries plaintively, "Mum, I want ter look aht of the winder." His neighbour, who has only just borne with this continued irritation, turns to the child and says with scorn, "You bloody kids, you 'as all the bloody sweets, you 'as all the bloody oranges, and now you wants the bloody winders too."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to A. L. Sackin.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

After questioning the petitioner, the Judge said to Mr. E. Ould, petitioner's counsel: "Do you really think this is a case for the exercise of my discretion?"

Mr. Ould: "Well, my lord, it is very near Christmas."

"Perhaps that is the best answer," said the Judge, and he granted the petitioner a decree nisi.—*The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury.*

At Crewe, still battling with its arrears of goods, officials said, "Just a little easier. But if human beings were cattle we should be prosecuted."—*News Chronicle.*

"Commercialisation" of the Christmas card was criticised yesterday by the Rev. E. C. Varah, vicar of Holy Trinity, Blackburn. He told the Blackburn Rotary Club that although as a parson he might be expected to receive more "holy" cards than others, 40 per cent. of those he received had nothing to do with Christmas. The real purpose of the Christmas card, he said, was not conveyed by a picture of Donald Duck.—*Manchester Guardian.*

COME YE TO THE WATERS

The author of this article was in charge of the Fisheries Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1912—1938.

DURING the black period, after the last war, when Tyneside, along with many other districts in like case, was a "depressed area," a scheme was framed for cleansing the estuary of the Tyne, which for many miles of its length is a broad open sewer. The scheme was simple and practical, and would have provided work skilled and unskilled; but it would have cost half as much as one day of the last war—about the equivalent of eight hours of the present one—and that was found to be a sufficient reason for not considering it. A few years later a child fell into the Tyne estuary, was promptly fished out, taken home, dried and put to bed. She had, however, swallowed a certain amount of Tyne water and she died, not long after, of acute gastritis. The medical evidence was clear, and the Coroner pointed the moral. But the Coroner's stern reproof awoke no echo in Whitehall—or, if it did, it awoke nothing else.

These facts are a portent of our national mentality in respect of water. They had nothing to do with the appointment of the Central Advisory Water Committee, whose third Report was issued last August. The Committee itself is another portent, a portent of a national habit of appointing Royal Commissions, Committees and such like at frequent intervals, and sometimes overlapping one another, to report on various aspects of the condition and use of our inland waters, nobody knows why. That, perhaps, is an overstatement. There may be those who know why these many bodies have been appointed during the past seventy-odd years, but the ordinary man is kept guessing. For, in the light of events, it clearly was not the purpose to obtain the best advice, and, on this foundation, to build a wise policy of conservation of our naturally abundant, but now sorely depleted and cruelly besmirched water resources. The present Committee repeats much sound advice given by most of its predecessors, and with a touch of sardonic humour attaches to its Report in appendix form an admirable digest of the main features of the earlier reports as if to show that they expect their bright thoughts to share with the gems of purest ray serene which they have brought momentarily to light, the dark unfathomed caves of public indifference and official neglect.

But suppose it were not so. Suppose that we had a Government—a National Government, too, pledged to build a better Britain, as well as a better world—with the vision and the courage to frame and to execute a wise policy for the conservation of our water resources, is there in the Committee's Report the material of such a policy? The answer is "No." There is much, but the edifice they plan has neither corner-stone nor roof. The Report prescribes no guiding principles of policy and no guide. And, inconsequently, wishing, perhaps, to introduce one note of originality into their Report, they interpose the topic of the conservation of fisheries—a very technical matter otherwise provided for—and suggest that fishery laws should be administered by the conservators of water. The conservation of water supplies is a matter affecting fisheries, but the conservation of fisheries is not a matter affecting the conservation of water. Take care of the waters and the existing Fishery Boards should have no difficulty in taking care of the fish.

I referred at the outset to the condition of the Tyne estuary. There the crucial question is pollution. Under existing law any polluting material, including crude sewage, may be discharged into any waters coming under the influence of sea tides, unless the Minister of Health, by Order, pronounces the waters to be "a stream." In that case they become subject to the laws affecting streams. There have been few such Orders, and none in recent years. Pollution is only one, though a very important one, of many aspects of the water question. The law against pollution is emphatic. It is illegal to put solid or liquid matter into a stream so as to cause pollution or interfere with its flow, to discharge solid or liquid sewage into a stream, or to discharge poisonous or polluting factory effluents into a stream. That sounds perfect. But there are reservations. Pollutions in progress at the time of the passing of the Act (1876) are privileged. So are effluents pumped from mines. Furthermore, the consent of the Minister of Health is required before proceedings can be taken against a factory undertaking, and he must first satisfy himself that the means for making the effluent harmless are reasonably practical and available in the circumstances of the case, and that no material injury will be inflicted by such proceedings on the interest of the industry concerned. Was there ever such futility? In short, the more obstinately poisonous the effluent the better the title of the manufacturers to pour it into the stream. The inherited right of every citizen to pure water must give way to the interests of big business and profits. In point of fact there are few, if any, factory effluents that cannot, with the aid of science, be made harmless, and from many of them useful by-products can be derived in the process, which will pay the cost. If the law is enforced, the remedies will be found. On the whole the law has not been enforced because there is nobody whose primary business it is to enforce it.

Our treatment of the question of pollution serves to illustrate our half-hearted approach to all the many questions affecting our water resources, now considerably diminished by the effects of the waterproofing of so much of the surface of the land through extensive building and the laying of tarmac roads, both of which interfere with the percolation of rain to the underground reservoirs. The claims upon our water resources are so many, often antagonistic, often misguided, that nothing less than a single, powerful administration, fully armed to enforce a comprehensive policy designed to conserve our supplies for the common benefit and to secure for each the share of water and of the amenities of water to which he is in equity entitled, can do justice to the case. Such an administration would not permit one community recklessly to filch the waters rightfully belonging to another, would curb the waste of piped water, would stay the hand of those who heedlessly throw away supplies which ought to be conserved. Every scheme of impounding surface water for domestic or industrial use, of poaching underground supplies, of using water as a source of power, and of drainage would be considered in relation to the governing necessity to secure for all rightful users this gift which is an essential of life. When the Psalmist chanted triumphantly "I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys," he might have had before the eyes of his soul a vision of the lovely chalk-streams of Southern England where springs bubble forth from the great sponge of chalk supercharged with the rains which fall on their gathering grounds in the downs. Their waters are a source of fertility and beauty for the valleys they have fashioned. But there is no one to stay the hand of those who to-day have adopted the grim slogan, "waters of a full cup are wrung out of them."

With all the advice of all their predecessors before them, the Advisory Committee passed over the most essential recommendation, repeated in one after another of the earliest reports of the long series. With variation only of terminology they pressed for "an adequately equipped Central Administrative Authority" armed with all necessary powers to deal with all questions affecting water resources and supply and charged with the duty to see that all enactments governing them are observed and that justice is done to all concerned. That implies a Ministry of Water with overriding powers over all departments and administrations, central or local. Guided and directed by such a central authority the Catchment Area Boards—and let us, by all means, have such Boards for local administration—will have the opportunity and the urge to do a great national work. And by all means let there be a Central Advisory Committee to help a Minister armed with full powers. But let us be spared the old, old stalking horse for a policy of *laissez faire*. We have had enough of that. In water the life we know had its beginnings. Without water there can be no life. Surely water is worth a Ministry of its own.

H. G. MAURICE

THE FOREMAN

"FOR all these reasons, my Lord," said the urgent little man in the stuff gown, "I invite your Lordship to say that there is no case to go to the jury." He wrapped the skirts of the gown around his waist as if about to be chastised, and then sat down suddenly as if to frustrate any attempt.

We all pivoted together until we faced the Bench. During the formal "submission of no case" to which we had just listened, the Judge had been barely visible from my seat in the jury box: he had sunk down in his seat with the appearance of stupor in which great judges listen to junior counsel. But he rose again, nodded portentously, and lifted himself round so as to face us. "Members of the jury," he said, "in this case you will please return a verdict, upon my direction, that you find the prisoner not guilty." He then lifted himself back again and began writing something.

His pen was very scratchy, but there was nothing else to listen to. After some minutes we became aware that the court usher was standing before us with both his arms raised as if we were the Hallé Choir; his hands were flapping gently, with an upward emphasis. We watched him closely for a while, and then: "Stand up, please," he said. We rose. The flapping continued, but now with a downward emphasis. We sat down again, and crossed our knees to show that we were in no way strange to the ritual. "No, no," said the usher, in a fierce whisper, "I didn't mean all of you." There were only seven of us (we were a wartime jury), so four of us stood up again.

The Clerk of the Court intervened. "Will all the jurors remain seated except the foreman?" he explained, and we all resumed our seats. The Clerk looked sternly at me. "You are the foreman, sir," he announced. "I'm so sorry," I said, leaning anxiously forward, "but I'm not the foreman, you know. As a matter of fact," I went on in a voice I had never used before, "we didn't elect a foreman before we began." I licked my lips, keeping the tongue out of view. "Foremen are not elected in this court," said the Clerk coldly; "you are in the foreman's seat, the seat nearest to the Bench, and the juror who sits there acts as foreman. Of course," he began in an even colder tone, "if you do not feel ——?" I rose hastily and (so far as I can remember) bowed. I was the foreman.

"Members of the jury," intoned the Clerk, "you find the prisoner, William John Smith, not guilty on this indictment as a whole, and that is the verdict of you all?" I have put the question mark here in the light of subsequent wisdom, but it sounded like an assertion, and one not to be lightly assented to. I turned to my fellow-jurors, who leaned sympathetically round me, and we began whispering together. "Well, we can't talk here," said one; "ask if we can retire to the jury room or something." I stood up and asked in my new voice if we might be allowed to retire. The Judge had stopped writing and was gazing at us with an almost zoological curiosity, so this time there was nothing to relieve the silence that followed. At length his Lordship took off his glasses and spoke. "You do not understand," he said quite kindly. "You are here as judges of fact, and I am here to judge as to the law. It is a question of law, and therefore one for me to decide, whether the evidence adduced by the prosecution in this case discloses an offence against the criminal law. I find that, in certain respects which need not in any way concern you, it does not. There is no case for you to consider. Accordingly there is nothing which you can usefully discuss if you retire. All you are required to do is

formally to declare that the prisoner is not guilty."

The Clerk repeated his formula—"and that is the verdict of you all?" Our one lady juror plucked my sleeve. "That young man is as guilty as sin," she whispered, "I don't agree that he is not guilty. Why should he get away with it like that just because someone has made a mess of the case? You must not say that we're agreed upon our verdict."

"Mr. Foreman," said the Clerk quite angrily this time, and I noticed that his face was red, "are you agreed upon your verdict?"

"No," I faltered, "this lady——."

"Now, listen," said the Judge. "It doesn't matter in the least what this lady says. You cannot, as a matter of law, find this man guilty. He has got to be discharged. As he has been formally placed in your charge according to the most ancient usage of the law, I cannot discharge him unless you do so first. You will remember, from the oath you took, that a juror swears to try the prisoner 'whom he shall have in charge.' Because it is my prerogative and duty, I direct you, I order you, to discharge him. If you do not, I must discharge you and have a fresh jury sworn for the mere purpose of getting a formal verdict of not guilty in respect of this man. Now please do as I tell you, and believe me when I say I know what is right. The question, 'are you agreed upon your verdict?' is purely rhetorical."

The Clerk wearily repeated the rhetorical question, and I let it go because he went on without a pause to the no less rhetorical bit about finding the prisoner not guilty. "No," I replied, "that is, yes—not guilty."

The Judge addressed the lay figure in the dock. "You are discharged," he said; and the figure rose and went down some stairs out of view. "You, too, are discharged," he then said to us, adding (ironically, I now believe), "with the thanks of the country for your attendance."

Outside we refreshed ourselves in a place across the road. A little man who must at least have had the "property" qualification for jury service said that he thought I should have stood out against the Judge. The jury was a bulwark against the mediaeval despotism of the judiciary, he said, and it should not be overridden like this. "Pity you weren't the foreman," I said, "you had nothing to say about all this in there." From that point the temperature of the discussion rose as the quality of its language fell, until the lady juror came in. "I'll tell you what I think, after all," she said. "It's all for the best. The prosecuting man said that, if we believed the evidence he was going to call before us, it would be our duty to find that young man guilty of larceny. I don't think I should have been happy to think of him going away to an asylum."

C. H. ROLPH

SEASONAL SHOWS

FIVE Christmas shows have kept one critic busy between two press days. I believe there have been difficulties with the productions, but there are still few signs of wartime economies. *Humpty Dumpty* opened at the Coliseum two nights before Christmas. A nursery rhyme, though this one tells of a tragic enough incident, is not enough for a pantomime plot, so Emile Littler, who has written the book, has introduced a search for a stolen crown and the rival loves of the Prince and Humpty Dumpty for the Princess Marigold. The egg falls and breaks in the first scene, and the rest of the story is a thread on which to string together the individual acts of the comedians. Nervo and Knox lead the fun, but they could not improve on their superb performance as the Ugly Sisters in last year's *Cinderella*. This is not their fault, for they have hard work to put over the poor jokes in the libretto. However, when they come to their own act, a burlesque of the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, the audience is more than satisfied. I have seldom seen Naughton and Gold in better foolery—who had the bright idea of the scene in the rolling ship's cabin?—while Hal Bryan as Simple Simon is the perfect pantomime clown and has withal a very good singing voice. But why choose "When can I have a banana-r-again" for community singing? The Society for Pure English should do something about this. I liked the Terry Juveniles better than their senior sisters, the John Tiller girls, who lacked the precision of former years. But six of these made us hold our breath while they bowled about the stage on large balls, never once losing a footing and coming to ground. Pat Kirkwood is a dashing Prince Rupert and Norma Dawn as Princess Marigold sheds oodles of sweet simplicity.

Evelyn Laye is this year's Prince Charming in *Cinderella* (His Majesty's). Her Regency get-up worn with poise and dash to match lends style to the whole production. Pretty Carole Lynne is Cinderella, while Nancy Munks gives character to the part of Dandini. Sid Plummer and Burton Brown (by the way, the former gives a most amusing act with a xylophone) play the Ugly Sisters in the traditional manner. I missed the usual fun with the Brokers' Men, and the Baron (Kenneth Blain) was altogether too staid. The high-light of this show is Tessie O'Shea. A plummy part has been found for her as the Baron's niece, and she works throughout the show as if she were organising the fun and games at a children's party. There is never a doubt that she is enjoying every minute of her scenes. The dancing of the chorus is slick, but the singing is weak. The transformation ballet is prettily set, though not as elaborate as those we have seen in previous years.

Admirers of *Alice in Wonderland* will be grateful to Miss Clemence Dane for keeping so closely to the original in her dramatised version now showing at the Scala Theatre. There are no wisecracks, topicalities or interjections of modern jargon—this is Lewis Carroll pure and neat. I should like to have seen more of the White and Red Queens (Dame Sybil Thorndike and Miss Zena Dare), but Alice, played enthusiastically by Miss Roma Beaumont, travels far, and we pass gaily from one incident to the next, thankful for the continuity of the performance made possible by the speedy changes of scene. Decor and costumes deserve an extra word of praise for their ingenuity and charm. Especially effective is the scene where Alice with a variety of animals is seen swimming about in her own tears. The play is admirably set to music by Mr. Richard Addinsell, although, at times, the music and the animal masks tend to make hearing a little difficult. However, children and adults will be well entertained by Miss Esmé Church's highly colourful and imaginative production.

Where the Rainbow Ends, at the Winter Garden, has been revised to suit the times. Nazism rears its head in the shape of the Dragon King and the young Russian friend of the Wicked Uncle salutes the flag of St. George as that of his brave ally. But once the children have delivered their propaganda for young Empire Builders, they become natural and adventurous youngsters. The pupils of the Italia Conti school, who take most of the parts, are clever and charming, and the adults who act with the children do not let them down. *Peter Pan* pursues its well-known course at the Cambridge Theatre, with Glynis Johns in the title role, at once as fay and boyish as Peter should be. Baliol Holloway, having a holiday from Shakespeare, is a fine Captain Hook.

These seasonal shows provide a better feast than we have any right to expect during this fifth winter of the war.

ELEANOR ROBERTSON

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Cinderella," at the Players'

With a stage the size of a pocket-handkerchief (one coupon) the company of the Players' Theatre have to exercise much ingenuity to produce a really effective version of *Cinderella*. The script used by Byron in 1860 seems to have needed comparatively little editing by Mr. Harradine. It relies mainly on the most outrageous puns. But if we in our sophistication object to being told that we need embrocation when we get out of the embers, the answer is that we are a lot of hypocrites, since we laugh with as little restraint as any Victorian music hall public. Hilarious is the word for the whole show. Don Gammel is terrific as the elder Ugly Sister, Heather Boys is a most personable and tuneful principal boy, and Charlotte Bidmead a most seductive wicked valet. But the company is good throughout, and the show ends with an admirably performed version of an old-fashioned harlequinade.

Sadler's Wells Ballet at the New Theatre

Miss Ninette de Valois's new ballet *Promenade* is agreeably unpretentious. Beauties in Directoire costume flirt with dashing ensigns, interrupting a butterfly-collector (a memory here of *Papillons?*). The ballet rather resembles an expensive Christmas card, more "refined" than vital, but the finale is brisk and the Haydn music sweet on the ear. The dances are well executed alike by M. Rassine and the corps de ballet. *Job*, also by Miss de Valois, has been revived. The peculiarly English music of Vaughan Williams not only is beautiful in itself but suits the equally English character of Blake's designs, making an interesting contrast with the Oriental legend. Mr. Helpmann carries through with immense gusto the mime so skilfully designed by Miss de Valois, and the ballet continues to be impressive. The Angels in the finale still look as if they belonged to the Folies-Bergère, but this solitary defect cannot be easily rectified until the male dancers return from the wars.

FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

["*We'll win the European war in* 1944."—General Eisenhower, 27th December.]

WHICH is the year to be signed with our victory?
Experts predict and commanders confer;
Well-informed comment is still contradictory—
This is the year.

Loud is the conflict of diverse opinions,
Caution marks Whitehall's and Washington's views,
Warnings are heard from the far-flung Dominions—
This is the news.

Roosevelt will venture on no undertaking,
Churchill still warns us of two years to wait,
Hull cannot guess when the clouds may be breaking—
This is a date.

This is the year when the Fortress will fold up,
This is the year when the New Order quits,
This is the year when the map will be rolled up,
This is *the* blitz.

This is the year when the Wehrmacht surrenders,
This is the year when they give up the fight,
For the Third Reich, encircled, and all its defenders,
This is good-night.

Over all voices this voice has priority,
No power on earth will our knock-out deter,
We have it this year on the highest authority,
This is the year.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

LAW AND REPRISAL

SIR,—The NEW STATESMAN AND NATION wrote appreciatively of Stalin's speech of some time back when he said that Russia had no quarrel with the German nation, and of the general line of Russian propaganda which then distinguished the German nation from its Nazi masters. It was pointed out, I think properly, that such an attitude sought to prevent the German soldier and civilian stubbornly fighting until every inch of German soil was occupied: and at what cost to the Allies! Many people, including Germans, believe that in the last war Wilson's Fourteen Points achieved the immeasurably great success of distracting the enemy's attention from complete concentration of effort which alone could have prolonged the war for another year. It had created

a choice in the German mind: peace on these terms or continue to fight. As England found in 1940, one cannot fight a war on logic, but upon emotion and belief. The German soldiers who in September and October 1918 cried "Blackleg!" to their comrades returning to the trenches had been fed upon hope, not fear.

Now there appears to be a change in Russian policy, if one reads the signs correctly. I only wish to deal with one point, which I am afraid may be of importance to us. The Germans threaten to try British and American airmen for murder of civilians in the bombed cities as a reprisal for the Kharkov trials.

These trials and executions had a respectable press in this country—they allowed a certain vicarious cruelty in reading the eyewitnesses' accounts and most people thought that it was well that a few brutal killers should meet a just end so promptly. That feeling was fair enough; but what has the retribution which overtook those few Germans loosed upon ourselves, the Americans, and the Russians too? The Germans say that we are wrong in ascribing war-guilt to subordinates, but that they will accept the theory in order to punish Allied airmen.

This raises two questions. The first is, are the Germans justified in taking this action and trying our airmen for alleged breaches of international law? In answer to this, it can be said that changing conditions render new targets the object of legitimate military attack, that war factory areas are important centres of military strength, and that Germany recognised the right to such attacks by her own aerial bombardment of open towns. But this does not furnish a complete answer. By international law as understood up to this war, civilians have been protected against military attack: thus, whatever new practice has arisen, and whether or not this has been initiated or condoned by the enemy, the German tribunal which seeks to enquire into the facts *could* convict the airmen, and, if the formalities of a trial are completed, it no doubt will. Thus the Kharkov trials have introduced a principle which it is very doubtful whether the United Nations would have accepted had it been fairly faced: namely, that a fighting man can be convicted and executed according to the legal code of his enemy (or its interpretation of the international code) for carrying out the military commands of his superiors; and this during the emotional strain of war, when attention to evidence is in the nature of things reduced to a particle of what it should be.

I am suggesting that the admission of such a principle is wrong: and further than wrong, unsound. It may lead, logically, to a position where no prisoner can expect to escape execution, owing to the peculiar conditions under which modern war is fought and the obsolescence of the old distinction between soldier and civilian, which means that both necessarily suffer casualties whatever the form of the attack. As the incident of the chaining of prisoners showed, fine distinctions are useless with an enemy who can take direct action. Once a principle is admitted, its application can be made as free as the conscience, or lack of it, allows; and it was surely to be hoped that prisoners on each side should escape further violence, whether legalised or not, until some proper unprejudiced machinery could be established for the calm investigation of their alleged crimes.

The second question raised goes to the point mentioned earlier in this letter; can we afford to frighten, in the chimerical hope of changing the behaviour of men deliberately trained to cruelty? If no combatant is safe to surrender, and armistice is shadowed by the gallows and blood, the wise man and the coward alike fight on.

N. H. CURTIS-RALEIGH

9 Wetherby Gardens, S.W.5.

ATROCITIES

SIR,—*Neapolitan Fudge* reported only what I had seen or conversations in which I was personally engaged in Italy. Your correspondent's husband states that he has seen "six or seven corpses of women and children left murdered, stripped and mutilated." I saw none and none was reported to me at first hand. I will believe him: but I would not report him in an article. No conclusion seems possible nor any generalisation desirable.

The public seem to admit descriptions of public executions without complaint. Are they becoming so toughened that they must cavil at an account of a war front because it does not contain stories of enemy atrocities by a writer who has heard of many but seen none? I must also accept Mrs. Cranley's husband's statement "the worst offenders being German boys between the ages of 16 and 18," because he is not here to explain what boys of 16 for instance are doing in an army which, with veteran spirit, has fought to some purpose for so long.

JOHN PUDNEY

THE EDUCATION BILL

SIR,—In your article you say: "the wording [of the Bill] implies a continuance of fee charging in 'auxiliary' schools—the new term which will cover in future both 'non-provided' elementary and state-aided secondary schools."

In fact

(i) the Bill *does* prohibit fees in all auxiliary schools, both primary and secondary (Clause 59 (1) read in conjunction with Clause 9 (2));

(ii) the only Grant-aided schools not expressly covered by the prohibition of fees are the Direct Grant schools, with which in fact the Fleming Committee were primarily concerned in their Special Report. As indicated in paragraph 32 of the White Paper, a decision on the future of this class of school has not yet been reached.

The next sentence of the article, which refers to grammar schools, "aided and not fully run by local education authorities," again shows some confusion of thought. The "aided" school under the scheme will, like the "controlled" school, be fully maintained by the authority, and no fees will be charged.

May I also take the opportunity of pointing out that in considering the estimates in the financial memorandum you quoted, it should be remembered that in so far as these estimates represent capital expenditure they are in the form of annual loan charges? In other words an amount of one million pounds per annum in the tables in respect of capital expenditure would, in fact, represent new buildings to the value of over twenty million pounds.

Board of Education,
Belgrave Square, S.W.1. D. H. LEADBETTER
Public Relations Officer

[There are two sets of terminology, one the existing usage, the other the new wording of the Bill and accompanying memorandum. This is probably the source of confusion. The phraseology is highly technical; but our point remains. Where a secondary school is now assisted, but not maintained by a Local Authority, it will be able, under the Bill, to become a maintained school if it so desires, and the Authority is willing to accept it as a part of the local provision; and if this occurs it will not be able to charge fees, except for boarding. But what we want to know is whether such schools are to be given the option of not becoming maintained schools, but of transferring to the "Direct Grant List," that is of receiving a grant direct from the Board instead of from the L.E.A. If this option remains, clearly many of the secondary schools at present assisted by L.E.A.'s will take advantage of it, and will thus be able to continue to charge fees. They will, moreover, as far as we can see, still be able to receive grants from the L.E.A.'s under the closing words of Clause 9 (i), even though they continue to charge fees. It is true that this power to charge fees may be recommended against by the Fleming Committee. Who knows? But even if this were to happen the Committee's views could not be made effective *without further legislation*, and it is obvious that such legislation would be strongly opposed, and that it is unlikely

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KEGAN PAUL

such a change could be made except as an integral part of the present Bill. Our correspondent's other points call for no comment, as we said nothing inconsistent with them.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—We are all familiar with the hyperbole of film publicity, with its exhaustive and exhausting superlatives. The New Education Act has had a preliminary puff sufficient to raise high hopes that it would prove to be a measure of real reform. The fulsome newspaper articles hailing it as the Children's Charter and the greatest advance yet in education are likely to have a boomerang effect when the implications of the Bill are examined in detail.

Was it not Milton who stated that New Presbyter is but Old Priest? What do the revolutionary proposals amount to that are to equip the country with an educational system worthy of democracy of the future? Under the high-sounding names of Grammar School, Technical High School and Modern School we can detect the familiar features of the State-maintained Secondary School, the Junior Technical School and the Senior Elementary School. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* The two important alterations are in the age of admission to the Technical School and of leaving the Elementary School.

It is worth pausing to consider the causes which have led to the feeling that the present institutions are inadequate for the task set them. There are no grounds for complacency about the standard of education of the ordinary citizen, and this can be attributed to three main difficulties under which the schools labour. The first and greatest is the size of the classes: up to 35 in the case of Secondary Schools and 50 in the case of Elementary Schools. Next comes the degree of administrative interference with which they have to contend. Finally there is the leaving age of 14 for the Elementary Schools—the most unstable of all ages—and its inevitable consequence that many of those leaving at 14 are virtually illiterate within a few years.

The Bill proposes to cure the third fault, but is indefinite in the case of the others. Yet the most serious evil is the size of the classes. Real education is impossible under such conditions. There is already a chronic shortage of teachers, and by commencing reform with the raising of the school age the shortage will be made more acute. No renaming of schools will have any effect on what goes on inside them. A generous revision of the staffing allowance is an urgent necessity if the existing schools are to discharge their proper functions. In every Senior School at present there is a high proportion of boys who are bored to tears and longing for release from lessons that have no appeal. The teachers are making heroic struggles, but how can they fit the curriculum to the boy in a class of 50?

There are many features in the government of State-maintained schools which are repugnant to the independent schools. With advantage much of the top-heavy administrative machine could be abolished, and the gap between the State and independent schools thereby lessened. If we are ever to enjoy a really national educational system, the bridging of this gap is an important initial step.

And this brings us to a striking omission from the Bill—the question of how the Public Schools come into the picture. Doubtless the reason that will be given is that the Fleming Committee has not yet made its report. It appears likely that the Bill will be passed into law before this report has been considered; possibly before it is published. It looks as if there is a determination to exclude the thorny question of the Public Schools from the Government's proposals. Perhaps this is another result of the ban on controversial legislation. We are evidently to retain the curious anachronism of segregating the children of the upper income levels from our efforts to prepare the youth of the nation for democratic living.

All this seems to point a moral. The much-heralded Act is likely to produce results comparable with those of the Mountain which was in travail. Unfortunately, once the Bill is passed there will be a feeling of complacency, and yet the real problem will remain untouched. Until the nation is ready for wholehearted unification of the educational system it would be better to content ourselves with the more modest but sounder plan of making the present system work. This requires:

(1) Drastic reduction of all classes to a maximum of 30;
(2) Overhaul of the scheme of management of the schools to give a degree of freedom comparable with that enjoyed by the independent schools;
(3) Raising of the school-leaving age to 15 by Statutory Order.

None of these requires legislation of a controversial nature. These steps would be cheaper and more efficient. They would give the nation value for money; and they would leave the way open for genuine reform by the unification of education when the time is ripe.

47 Minterne Avenue, Southall, Middlesex. C. G. VERNON

CIVIL AVIATION

SIR,—I have no quarrel with Mr. Leslie Minchin over his desire for "out-and-out international ownership" of civil aviation, but I strongly disagree that the best way to get it is to put forward a demand for it at this moment on an all-or-nothing basis. My view is that if we make such a demand that we shall get nothing rather than all, and this view is supported both by the debates in the Commons and Lords and by the Roosevelt pronouncement.

Mr. Minchin's criticisms of my article would have been amply justified if the title of that article had been "The Ultimate Goal of Civil Aviation." But it was actually headed, "A Practical Policy"—a title which was defined as "one which might prove acceptable to the majority of those interested." Thus I move along the road towards internationalism as fast as one dare without courting such a crash as would put an end to all hope of ever reaching the target; but Mr. Minchin stares at the horizon—and falls into the ditch.

Mr. Minchin will find all his detailed criticisms, except one, answered in a rereading of my article. The exception is the question: who is to subsidise an international air service? Ye gods, what a question for an internationalist to ask! Who subsidises UNRRA or ILO?

I think we can, eventually, cope with the reactionaries, but who is going to protect the many progressives from the handful of Progressives?

IAN MIKARDO

A GREAT POWER

SIR,—In your last issue Frederick Jellinek asks what is a Great Power. The answer is very simple. A Great Power is any state which is just too powerful for Great Britain to take on single-handed without a qualm as to the result. D. S. HOPKINS

22 Hurst Way, S. Croydon.

THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT

SIR,—Robert Sherwood's play *There Shall Be No Night* is a political play, so perhaps Mr. Desmond MacCarthy was justified in devoting half of his review of the play to politics rather than drama.

But was it necessary to give us his personal opinions about Germany and Germans? And in such a dogmatic way, as though naturally everyone agreed with him? "I was slow to believe myself," he says, "that the German ethos cannot be changed by prosperity and friendship, but only through the suffering of absolute defeat."

Perhaps here is a clue to a great deal of Vansittartism. Is Mr. MacCarthy suggesting that what the Allies offered Germany in 1919-1933, the incubation period of Nazism, was "prosperity and friendship"?

JULIAN DALLAS

c/o Al Parker, 55 Park Lane, W.1.

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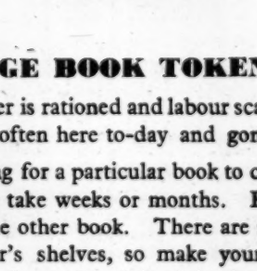

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Among recent anthologies there has been none more modest or more delightful than *Landmarks: A Book of Topographical Verse for England and Wales*, edited by G. Rostrevor Hamilton and John Arlott (Cambridge, 8*s.* 6*d.*). It does very well what it sets out to do; that is, to bring together a number of poems with local attachments; and the focus being on place and not on literary performance, we are able to enjoy the poetry as it comes with rather less than usual self-consciousness. Shadwell Stair, Bath, Snowdon, Oxford, the Sussex Downs, the woods at Appleton House, the river Avon near Rugby, are signposts here: the writers' names—which happen to be Wilfrid Owen, Swinburne, Wordsworth, Hopkins, Kipling, Marvell, and Landor—are for the moment of secondary importance. So, with a map in one's head, rather vague, perhaps, in its eastern and northern outlines, one goes from county to county, from famous watering-place to unexplored moorland. An eighteenth-century traveller laments the ribbon development of his time. The Lake District has its coalmines as well as its Skiddaw. Pilgrims to Canterbury are followed by charabancs shedding bottles as they go. It is too late, perhaps, for Westminster Bridge to shake off the noble spectre of Wordsworth, for Grantchester to survive the swelter of a Munich afternoon, but so far as it is possible *Landmarks* loosens such tyrannies. A landscape emerges from this volume, both more complete and truer in its particularity than the hackneyed picture of England. Many lesser and little-known poets contribute to the effect, and there is no incongruity in the juxtaposition, say, of the translucent images of Marvell and this fragment from a verse journal—Richard Braithwait's *Barnabees Journal*:

> Thence to Stilton, slowly paced,
> With no bloom nor blossome graced,
> With no plums nor apples stored,
> But bald, like an old man's forehead;
> Yet with Innes so well provided,
> Guests are pleas'd when they have tride it.

Landmarks, in fact, though tastefully chosen, avoids the usual snobberies of taste. With no best or worst to think of, a new value seems to attach to many of the pieces included. And—this is for me the test of any anthology—our attitude towards the poems and authors we know well is, in however small a degree, altered. For a moment the usual approaches are barred. We have got in by a back door.

Crabbe, now; a writer whom one takes far too much for granted. He is one of those who always pull me up when I find them quoted, and though the same passages are cited time after time, they surprise again solidly, as they do here. I remember that once, writing about Rimbaud, and trying to find his English equivalents, I hit on Blake at one end of the scale and unexpectedly, after some wavering, Crabbe at the other. There is, in fact, in Rimbaud's time, and before him, no other English poet besides Crabbe who can provide anything approaching the realism of *Les Chercheuses de Poux*. Consider his oyster-catcher (and his poems are full of such passages):

> . . . Far other craft our prouder river shows,
> Hoys, pinks and sloops; brigs, brigantines and snows:
> Nor angler we on our wide stream descry,
> But one poor dredger where his oysters lie:
> He, cold and wet, and driving with the tide,
> Beats his weak arms against his tarry side,
> Then drains the remnant of diluted gin
> To aid the warmth that languishes within,
> Renewing oft his poor attempts to beat
> His tingling fingers into gathering heat.

It isn't quite Rimbaud. The realism is still, consciously, an antidote to pastoral and ideal imaginings, and has yet to attain its own lyricism; and, though Crabbe has not been superseded by any later poet, it isn't hard to conceive of a Crabbe more verbally inspired. Pope, indeed, the starting-point of much in Crabbe, surpasses him in the one or two passages that hint at a development in realism.

> In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
> The floors of plaister, and the walls of dung,
> On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
> With tape-ty'd curtains, never meant to draw,
> The George and Garter dangling from that bed
> Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
> Great Villiers lies . . .

There is nothing in *The Village* or *The Borough*—in the similar interiors of cottages or workhouses—to equal this, and the memory of Pope's famous passage no doubt overshadows the reader of Crabbe, impelling him to look for grim radiances that never quite appear. Crabbe *has* a glow that comes out best in his landscapes of heath and estuary, but it would be unfair to judge him solely on these. How often, for example, lines like the following meet the eye in anthologies:

> Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
> Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume.
> Here the dwarf sallows creep, the septoil harsh,
> And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh;
> Low on the ear the distant billows sound,
> And just in view appears their stony bound;
> Nor hedge nor tree conceals the glowing sun,
> Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,
> Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run.

—so that we tend to identify this poet with a few grey-purple passages, and to rate him honourably, but rather low.

The point, however, of the lines just quoted is that they are incidental to a narrative in which a lover, riding to visit his Laura, goes blithely through a drab landscape and thinks to himself how beautiful Nature is; the climax of the story is not reached till his return journey when, having missed his love, he sees everything—including a trim parkland—in the blackest of colours. It is an excellent story, with a subtle flavour. The merits of *The Lover's Journey* lie only partly in the botanising of particular passages, and of Crabbe's verse in general it is true to say that, flat though it may be by romantic standards, it is elevated enough for its purpose.

Yet nearly all criticism of Crabbe is made by means of the poetical approach. He appears in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, but not in histories of the novel—and there, if anywhere, he belongs. There are few better short stories in English than *The Lover's Journey*, *Peter Grimes* and *Silford Hall*, few realistic fictions to equal *The Village*. The writers with whom I should class him are George Eliot and Gissing; his affinity, in art and temper, with the first of these is especially striking, and would be worth pursuing at length. Approached thus, the qualities of his art would be seen to be his social morality, love of truth (and not only of an ugly fact), sense of character, sly wit, and avid eye: qualities by no means as dim or negative as a short-sighted and technical analysis of his poetry may seem to suggest. He is, indeed, though blunt-featured and often prosy, one of the most original writers England has produced. The fact that his vision is penny-plain has told against him heavily in a literature that prefers the tuppence-coloured, but to be condescending to Crabbe (as many critics, including Mr. F. L. Lucas, have been) because Crabbe isn't Keats or Tennyson, seems to me a critical solecism of the most elementary kind. Even his wit has been held against him—

> A quiet, simple man was Abel Keene,
> He meant no harm, nor did he often mean

—as though it betrayed a kind of stupidity.

Perhaps the masterpiece of a writer whose qualities are widely diffused through his work is the story of Peter Grimes in *The Borough*. A brutal, drunken fisherman whose parents have died of grief, Peter Grimes is suspected of having killed two young apprentices, goes melancholy mad, and half-confesses to his crimes in a narration of delirious power. After the murders, his father's spirit, attended by the two dead boys, came to haunt him on the river.

> And so I sat and look'd upon the stream,
> How it ran on, and felt as in a dream:
> But dream it was not: No!—I fix'd my eyes
> On the mid-stream and saw the spirits rise:
> I saw my father on the water stand
> And hold a thin pale boy by either hand;
> And then they glided ghastly on the top
> Of the salt flood, and never touch'd a drop:
> I would have struck them, but they knew th' intent,
> And smiled upon the oar, and down they went.
> Now, from that day, whenever I began
> To dip my net, there stood the hard old man—
> He and those boys: I humbled me and prayed
> They would be gone: they heeded not, but stayed:
> Nor could I turn, nor would the boat go by,
> But, gazing on the spirits, there was I:
> They bade me leap, but I was loth to die:
> And every day, as sure as day arose,
> Would these three spirits meet me ere the close:
> To hear and meet them daily was my doom,
> And "Come," they said, with weak, sad voices, "come."
> To row away, with all my strength I tried,
> But there were they, hard by me in the tide,
> The three unbodied forms—and "Come," still, "come," they cried.

As a contrast to this macabre tale the reader might try *Tales of the Hall* and *Posthumous Tales*, which contain some of Crabbe's best work. He can be humorous as well as harsh, and with affluence came some lightening of murk and pity. Otherwise, during sixty years of activity and illness he changed remarkably little either in character or in the art so steadily practised. He began under the eyes of Johnson and Reynolds and passed on something to Wordsworth: like Blake, with a foot in two ages, and a place in neither.

G. W. Stonier

THE WORLD OF JANE AUSTEN

Talking of Jane Austen. By Sheila Kaye-Smith and G. B. Stern. *Cassell.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

I remember Frederic Myers telling me that in order to secure for his last moments a pleasure which should be both exquisite and fresh, he was determined not to read Jane Austen again till he was on his death-bed. Others may think the precaution superfluous, because however often the novels are read they keep their freshness; and of these are the authors of *Talking of Jane Austen*. The book is well-named. It is a rich and varied and desultory discussion of the six masterpieces, with no general thesis or sustained argument; and a fellow-Janeite (to use a rather discomfortable word which seems to be indispensable) can only write about it in its own discursive manner, taking part, as it were, in the conversation. The two writers belong, probably, to the last generation of those who could say that they "can feel at home and be as much alive in Jane Austen's world as in their own": they address their talk to their fellows, and do not expect or try to make proselytes; but no doubt they will.

Perhaps the most salient feature of the book is to be found in Miss Kaye-Smith's treatment of *Mansfield Park*. Here she discovers for once a "puritanical, censorious, deliberately elevating Jane" of whom there is elsewhere no trace; and she tentatively suggests that the change may be due to the influence of the Evangelical Revival. "We know," she says, "that the novel was written after a silent interval of some years, which the author had spent mainly in Bath, where she would have had plenty of opportunity for hearing some of the great Evangelical preachers." "Puritanical" seems an apter word than "Evangelical" for the new tone, which certainly calls for an explanation. Miss Stern also has an original suggestion to make about *Mansfield Park*. Many readers have wished that Fanny Price had married Henry Crawford, even at the cost of a consequential and less promising match between Mary Crawford and Edmund Bertram; but Miss Stern goes farther, and gives her reasons for thinking that this was Miss Austen's first intention, only discarded when the story was far advanced. (Here she fails to convince her collaboratrix, who cannot believe that so deliberate an artist would have been, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, wiggle-waggle on such an important point.)

Several chapters are taken up with valuable and exhaustive collections of data from the novels on such subjects as country life, the education and pursuits of young ladies, the clergy, clothes, and food. Miss Kaye-Smith, who, like Alice, "always takes a great interest in questions of eating and drinking," is especially good on this topic, though she leaves out two of my favourite

gourmets: Mr. Hurst, who took no further interest in Elizabeth on learning that she preferred a plain dish to a ragout; and Dr. Grant, who had to preach himself into a good humour on Sunday after quarrelling about green geese from Monday morning to Saturday night.

Miss Stern has a striking passage on Jane Austen's avoidance of Death, pointing out how few of her characters die, and those few off the stage. Rather strangely, she makes no mention of an incident which has been used by squeamish critics to twit the author with heartlessness: Mrs. Musgrove's "large fat sighings" when for once in a while she remembers her detrimental sailor son. Another disquisition treats of Miss Austen's preference for giving her personages ordinary and rather humdrum names: Penelope and Lydia are cited as the only exotics among all the Marys, Marias, Lucys, Susans, Janes, and so on. This brought back to my mind a suggestive bit-bit of information for which I wish I could give chapter and verse. Many years ago a Janeite friend told me he had found a ship in a Navy List of the early 1800's whose complement of officers displayed all the principal names in *Mansfield Park*: Bertram, Price, Norris, Crawford, Rushworth, Grant—if I remember rightly, all were there.

Questions of "snobbery" keep cropping up throughout the book. Was Emma a snob?; was Elinor Dashwood?; was Jane Austen herself? Nowadays it is held snobbish even to recognise the bare fact that class-distinctions exist; and this may be all to the good, but it is a mistake to apply such a standard to past epochs. A great modern philosopher once remarked to me that in the eighteenth century nobody was a snob, because everybody was. That was too sweeping: old Mrs. Ferrars was clearly a snob when she delivered her famous "philippic," *Miss Morton is Lord Morton's daughter*; but it is surely "unhistorical" to brand Emma for not wanting her best friend to marry a farmer, or Elinor because she shrank from being introduced into society by the vulgar though warm-hearted Mrs. Jennings.

Miss Kaye-Smith admits that she is "more addicted to scenes and places than to people," so it is natural that the best character-studies should come from Miss Stern. Her re-drawing of Anne Elliot (pp. 52–3) is a beautiful piece of work, and she has another conspicuous success with Lady Bertram, though she passes over one of her chief titles to fame: "Do not act anything improper, my dears. Sir Thomas would not like it." On the other hand, it is flabbergasting to find her ranking Lady Catherine de Bourgh with Colonel Brandon and Lady Russell among the "Failures," on the ground that her rudeness is not only intolerable but impossible. Here we see that a sense of proportion may betray itself; and Miss Kaye-Smith corrects her colleague's aberration, observing that although Lady Catherine, like her opposite number, Mr. Collins, is undeniably a caricature, "she obeys the rules of caricature in that her lines are only exaggerations of a faithful likeness," and asking us to estimate the loss to *Pride and Prejudice* if these two grotesque and gorgeous megatheria had been toned down to the realism of Mrs. Norris and Dr. Grant.

I must allow myself one regret, for the absence of any tribute to Sir William Lucas, who is to me one of the most pleasurable of the secondary characters.

The book provides a formidable and exacting "Quiz," in which I am afraid I should hardly have scored more than half-marks; and the last two chapters deal with the perennial problem of arranging the novels in order of merit. Miss Stern puts *Persuasion* first, *Emma* second: Miss Kaye-Smith vice versa; and they are both prepared for the astonishment and odium which they will incur by putting *Pride and Prejudice* bottom. But I don't think they would dissent at all strongly from my own opinion that the question can best be treated on the lines of the Caucus race in *Alice*: "Everybody has won, and everybody must have a prize."

EDWARD MARSH

NUNS, MONKS AND PRIESTS

They Are People. Edited by SISTER MARIELLA GABLE, O.S.B. *Sheed and Ward.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This is a collection of short stories by various English, Irish and American writers, in which the chief characters are nuns or monks or priests. It is the delusion of the American editress that these have habitually been presented to us as sinister and monstrous figures, conspiring with casual wickedness and extravagant power; and, of course, there are popular books which have taken this line. The characters are, mainly, melodramatic derivations from the Jesuit conspirators or the Jacobites. But generally speaking one recoils from the priest or nun in fiction because, in Protestant countries, he or she is commonly presented with appalling sentimentality and the most cloying romanticism, and is surpassed in this respect only by the sheiks of Araby and girls of the limberlost. A second, but tacit delusion of the editress is that the best short stories about priests and nuns are sympathetic to their vocation; but in most Catholic countries there is a strong anti-clerical movement, and it would be nonsense to say that admirable stories on this subject have not been written by anti-clerical or sceptical writers. The fact is that sympathy or antipathy is not the first requirement for dealing with the religious orders. The novelist requires knowledge. And especially since the very choice of the monastic or conventual life may give a too facile, automatic and indiscriminate dramatic stance to the character of a human being who may be little different from the ordinary run of people. Here Sister Mariella is right: "they" are people.

And the religious subject, so long neglected, has an immense fascination. We are faced by the arbitrary, by the craving for authority, the acceptance of discipline, the doing of violence to the self. We see a denial of life going hand in hand with an untroubled acceptance of it. We see momentous struggles being built around trivialities. In every way, the religious subject stirs important human emotions and, though the events in some of these stories are small, one does not have the impression—so common in contemporary books of short stories—that the stories are about nothing. The very fixedness of the character of nuns and priests is something to which the reader and the other characters have to react. Sister Mariella points out how dramatically impressive this fixity is in a story like Paul Horgon's *The Surgeon and the Nun*—one of the best in this collection. A nun has been obliged to help a doctor to perform an operation in a desert shack in New Mexico, under terrifying circumstances. The doctor has worked a day and a night to save a dying Mexican, and when at last the man is saved and taken off to hospital, the exhausted doctor looks to the nun for a word of praise. All she says is:

> "I will pray for you, doctor."
> "What?"
> "That you may overcome your habit of profanity."

A woman does not have to be a nun to achieve triumphs of understatement; but those words do suggest to the reader a startling vision of the disciplines possible to man. And one shudders at the "happy" ending that story might have had. The triteness of the devout has been one of their considerable gifts to literature.

Taking the veil is the painful subject of several stories. It is treated with a pagan strength by Elizabeth Madox Roberts in *The Sacrifice of the Maidens*; but most realistically in *A Nun's Diary*, by Sister Mary Francis, an overwhelming human document. Here a highly conscious young woman tells how she came to enter a convent and describes the fluctuations of her spiritual struggles. It is an honest and tragic document, for her final ecstasies are essentially Protestant; she is, without knowing it, far from the Catholic conception of life. And there are terrible little sentences in the narrative which suggest how long a road she has before her.

> After a short visit to the Chapel to-day, where I placed the act I was about to do in the safe keeping of Heaven, I wrote my final vows. The first time was not satisfactory, for Mother Superior suggested that I do it over again—making the writing smaller.

There are stories by L. A. G. Strong—his *The English Captain* is the best thing he has ever written; an excellent Antonia White and good stories by Jack English, Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain, Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald and Morley Callaghan. There is no James Joyce. The Irish writers score, for they are free of the strain and primness of the Anglo-Saxon writers who accept the doctrine of original sin as a painful duty and without the Irish affection.

Here are a few lines from Frank O'Connor's *A First Confession*. A boy goes to confess that he is thinking of killing his grandmother:

> "Your grandmother?"
> "Yes, father."
> "Does she live with you?"
> "She do, father."
> "And why do you want to kill her?"
> "Oh, God, father, she's a horrible woman."
> "Is she, now?"
> "She is, father."
> "What way is she horrible?"
> "She takes snuff, father."
> "Oh! my."
> "And she goes round in her bare feet, father."

Catholic puritanism is comically erratic; Miss Kate O'Brien's excellent novel about convent life, entitled *Land of Spices*, is banned by the pious Irish censor, but the nun who edits these stories recommends it as the best novel in English about the conventual life.

V. S. PRITCHETT

PLANNER'S PARADISE

Wealth for Welfare. By H. W. FOSTER and E. V. BACON. *Macmillan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

An engaging mental exercise is to sit in one's armchair and plan a brave new world. Messrs. Foster and Bacon indulge in this entertainment with a skill, a grace, a wealth of fact and an elaboration of detail which most armchair gymnasts do not conspicuously possess. They deplore the waste and neglect which characterise vast areas of the earth, not least in our own Empire, and put forward a plan for their bold, imaginative economic development. The proposal is to establish impartial, efficient and far-sighted Development Authorities for different colonial regions; these should be integrated into a parent Imperial Development Authority to cover Britain, India and the Dominions; and the Imperial Development Authority will in the end be linked with a World Development Authority. The Imperial and Colonial Authorities are to be financed mainly by a capital levy on the British public, to run into a few thousand million pounds. The development works will in the course of time bring in sufficient return to make this a reasonable investment. What the authors stress and restress is that the Authority should be removed from the realm of "party politics" and the Civil Service, and should be run on a business basis—though, strangely, it would also be accountable to Parliament with a Minister at its head. "In our view, the business of development should be separated from the duties of administration." This "business of development" is to cover agriculture, industry, town-planning, transport, marketing—every facet of economic life—and yet it "must be impartially conceived and efficiently performed in the interests of the community as a whole, and to this end should, we feel, be removed as far as is practicable from the ordinary trammels of administration and the arena of party conflict. . . ." What a paradise for the planner! Give him £3,000 million pounds and let him go ahead free from the trammels of administration and the arena of party conflict. If only the world worked that way!

There is another practical point which bothers me about this plan. Where exactly

to the colonial peoples come in? The writers admit that they must be "associated," but are very vague as to how. The directors of the separate Colonial Authorities might be appointed, they suggest, half by the Colonial Governments (which are usually Governments of British officials), and half by the Imperial Development Authority in London—the London and consisting partly of officials and partly of members of the business community." And when the Colonies have been satisfactorily "developed" by these influences, will the Development Authorities, with all their wealth and power, quietly walk out and leave the colonial peoples to self-government and self-expression? Many of us share the burning dislike of poverty and waste and destruction, under which large colonial areas suffer and stagnate, and the writers have done well to draw attention to these problems and to provide us with many striking facts. It is good, too, to be challenged with the immensity of the task and the need for planning on a scale hitherto undreamt of. But, as the authors themselves so wisely remark, "Projects must be both economically and politically feasible." RITA HINDEN

THE WORD-FANCIER

Just Another Word. By IVOR BROWN. *Cape.* 6s.

Every respectable writer has an affection for the words that are the material of his craft, and we English are lucky in having a particularly large vocabulary. The pity is that so many vigorous words have become obsolete or merely local, while less expressive words totter on, tired and deserving death or at least a long rest. Mr. Ivor Brown's *A Word in Your Ear* showed that he had a nice palate for language, and he has given his book a pleasing successor, *Just Another Word*. This again is an anthology of words with miniature essays dependent.

In a lively introduction, Mr. Brown teases the Government Spokesmen and the Political Correspondents for their jargon of *clichés* and abstractions.

Still plans "bid fair to come to fruition." Still "new avenues are opened" for diplomatic exploration; still "the proposals are couched in friendly terms." . . . More and more do I find myself put in a coma by English of this sort. . . . It becomes like the noise you do not notice, such as the roar of traffic in the townsman's ear.

Mr. Brown transcribes a phrase: "In the opinion of authoritative circles at the higher levels it is considered that the situation is showing an increasing tendency to deteriorate." As he says, this merely means "Those who know say that things get worse." And he adds that the more people wrap their thoughts in such wadding, the less effectively do they drive into the minds of their readers and listeners. But surely, at least in this instance, that exactly is the writer's purpose: he upholsters the fact to reduce its penetrative power. Similarly, revolutionaries no longer "kill"—they "liquidate," because that sounds less brutal. (Odd, nevertheless, that they should pick a metaphor derived from a purely capitalist custom!)

Another comment by Mr. Brown: "It does not require much reading of contemporary verse to realise that there is scarcely any liking, and certainly no love, for words as such." I doubt if this is true. Contemporary poets don't like the same words as Stephen Phillips (or Keats), and the musical effects they seek are also different. Likewise Berg and Bartok use harmonies different from those of Saint-Saens (or Schubert). But whatever the faults of an Auden, a Dylan Thomas, and a Rodgers, their love for words *as such* seems to me obvious, and indeed each has his own vivarium of pet words, by which his work could be recognised even if it were unsigned.

Nobody with a taste for language could read this anthology of over 130 words without pleasure, instruction, and the desire to annotate. How cheering to learn that the Widow Twanky takes her name from Twankai, a Victorian term for tea derived in turn from a city in China. That the word *glib* is still used in its original sense of "smooth" or "slippery" as applied to material surfaces—"Be careful," an old caddie said to Mr. Brown, "the greens are glib here." That *jaunty* and *gingerly* both have the same origin as *gentle* and *genteel*. That Jeremiah—or rather his inspired translators—used the word *chapt* of the ground, to mean the split, baked earth in a drought. And what a treasure is *scobberlotcher*, which Mr. Brown has disinterred from Aubrey:

> Dr. Kettell, when he scolded at the idle young boies of his college, he used these names, viz., Turds, Tarrarags (these were the worst sort, rude rakells), Rascal-Jacks, Blindcinques, Scobberlotchers (these did noe hurt, were sober, but went idleing about the grove with their hands in the pocketts and telling the number of trees there or so).

Here are some of the notes I have made in my copy of *Just Another Word*:

Codger. Possibly connected with Arabic *khoja*, which means a schoolmaster, but often connotes sharpness.

Darkling. Mr. Brown explains that this began as an adverb, and quotes from Shakespeare, Milton and Keats. It occurs also in Dr. Johnson's most beautiful line:

> Roll darkling down the current of his fate.

Gillyflower. This, as Mr. Brown says, appears sometimes as *Gillivor* and even *July-flower*, but the origin is Greek, *karuophullon*, the clove.

Jimp. "Mainly Scottish, for slender or scarce." The same as *jim* or *gim*, meaning "neat"? Horace Walpole quotes Pulteney's song on Strawberry Hill, "Clairmont kept so gim."

Lionne. Quoted by Mr. Brown from Ouida, with the comment "A nice 'appellative' that we appear to have dropped." Doesn't it come from Musset's *L'Andalouse?*

> C'est ma maitresse, ma lionne.

Nuzzle. Francis Thompson in his essay on Shelley uses it transitively—so, the O.E.D. says, does Nashe—"The meteors nuzzle their noses in his hands."

"Did Quarles pronounce conjoin, conjine—or is it just a false rhyme?" Regular rhyme a good deal later than Quarles, e.g. in Pope:

> False as his Gems, and canker'd as his Coins
> Came cramm'd with capon, from where Pollio dines.

Among the words discussed by Mr. Brown are: *Akimbo*, *blink*, *cantrip*, *dimpsy*, *fubsy*, *glimmer*, *indagate*, *moonling*, *pightle*, *runagate*, *truckle*, and *wanion*. Sometimes he does not give the etymological history, but always the words launch him into a lickerish little essay. I wish every writer would sometimes retrieve old words—I can boast myself of having embellished these columns with one flower from Mr. Brown's bouquet, the caconym "pilgarlic." Readers also would find word-collecting a grateful hobby, and I recommend not only Mr. Ivor Brown's two books, but Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith's *The English Language* in the Home University Library, from which they will learn, among many more important facts, that the words "trousers," "banjo" and "galosh" all derive from the same language—Greek.

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Denmark and the Danes in wartime. This is, however, well worth reading, especially in connection with the Treaty of Versailles and the command of the Baltic.

As a matter of fact, in spite of the defeat of the Hohenzollern Reich in 1918, the Baltic remained a German inland sea. Versailles reduced the German navy so that it could not compete with the navies of the Western Powers on the high seas, but it left it strong enough to make the Danish Straits inaccessible and to rule the Baltic. The annexation of Slesvig-Holstein in 1866 had eliminated the chance of that province being used by an enemy for an attack against Germany; it gave Bismarck full military control over Denmark and the Danish Straits, while the Kiel Canal, as Moltke said, doubled the strength of the German fleet by enabling it, unseen and unmolested by the enemy, to pass into the North Sea or the Baltic. By her control of the Baltic Germany has been able to separate Western from Eastern Europe. Strategically this is of far-reaching importance, for industrialised Western Europe is an arsenal of any anti-German coalition, while Eastern Europe is a reservoir of man-power and raw materials.

Nowadays the North Sea is not usually called the German Ocean; but the Baltic is certainly a German lake.

The main part of the book is concerned with the description of the Danish island of Bornholm, which contains fine scenery together with a number of Round Churches about 700 years old. The photographs are, as usual in these books, excellent, and there are two good maps. The author meets a number of amusing people and overflows with anecdotes and reminiscences such as the following:

> This reminded me of the doctor when he discovered that there was nothing physically wrong with a servant-girl who lay in bed. For eight weeks, she explained, she had been in that house and not a cent of wages had she received. Until she had been paid she would stay where she was. "Well," said the doctor, "I've been attending these people for two years, and I've not been paid either. Make room for me."

Now and again he introduces little pieces of Heinesque verse which are pleasing in their context.

E. S. P. HAYNES

Paul Cézanne: Water Colours. By LIONELLO VENTURI. *Bruno Cassirer.* 10s. 6d.

The publishers are to be congratulated on this production. The photographs are straightforward, the text is intelligent and helpful, the price is reasonable. Sig. Venturi holds that Cézanne's watercolours—his later watercolours at all events—are, at times and within their narrow limits, as expressive as his oils: by means of well-chosen examples he seems to make good his claim. Rightly he takes up Roger Fry, whom rightly he treats with the greatest respect, for having argued that "somewhere around 1885 the style of Cézanne's oil paintings was influenced by the style of his watercolours." In fact, says Venturi, it was the other way round. Nevertheless, critics will still find it convenient to describe a certain phase as Cézanne's watercolour period, and readers who understand imperfectly what is meant will be misled. Cézanne was an oil painter if ever there was one: he used watercolour as watercolour should be used, that is, as a means of catching evanescent experiences. Properly, therefore, the critic insists that to Cézanne painting in watercolours was never more than an ancillary art. All which notwithstanding, if he is right in dating his second plate, *Près d'Aix*, 1867, it seems clear that in these early years Cézanne was more himself—more the Cézanne whom we know—in watercolours than in oils.

It is a pity the publishers should have allowed themselves to be cajoled into the tiresome habit of printing titles in French and English. This gives an air of provincialism to a production which is anything but provincial. If translate they must, they should choose their translators better. Doubtless Zola would have liked to live in a "castel" but, as the plate shows, he did not.

Teach Yourself Russian. By MAXIMILIAN FOURMAN. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 3s.

Colloquial Russian. By MARK SIEFF. *Kegan Paul.* 6s.

Writing a grammar book is a highly skilled and an arduous task, yet the platitude that it is necessary to be an expert in order to do so has hardly been sufficiently stressed. Both a theoretical knowledge of the language and a practical experience of teaching it are indispensable for such an undertaking, which is only justifiable if the new system of presenting the language is an improvement on the ones already in existence. Why does, then, the author of *Teach Yourself Russian* go on perpetuating the errors which marred so many such industrious efforts in the past? It is depressing to open his book at almost any page and find the same old friends—or enemies—staring one in the face: the persistent use of the verb "to have" (eemiet), which, in idiomatic Russian, is replaced by an expression equivalent to the French "il y a" or "chez moi"; the stringing together of several personal pronouns; the excessive employment of the predicative form of adjective, and so on, and so forth.

At school one favourite jibe at the teaching of foreign languages was a sentence (imaginary) from a German Grammar: "Where is your aunt? Is she not on a tree?" We do not suggest that Mr. Fourman's examples of Russian speech are of this type, but throughout his book there is a flavour of artificiality and far too many sentences that no Russian would ever think of saying. There are also phrases which have been translated literally from the English into Russian, such as: "Excuse me, what is the time?" instead of idiomatic Russian: "Will you please tell me?" or "May I ask what time it is?" It is a pity, for otherwise his advice to the student of Russian is sound, though one may disagree with the implication that it does not matter if, to begin with, no trouble is taken to speak correctly. To change a wrong habit is much more difficult than to form a good one.

Mr. Mark Sieff's *Colloquial Russian* is a good book for the purpose he intends it to serve. He has taken great care to explain Russian pronunciation and system of stresses—most important to a non-Russian who wants to be understood by Russians. Yet even he allows himself the use of the word "ditia" for "child," instead of the far more common "rebionok," and lets an occasional mistranslation creep in. "Vozzha" is not a "horse's lead" but a rein.

Drawn and Quartered. By CHARLES ADDAMS. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12s. 6d.

The punning title of this book of drawings reveals the artist's obsession with the macabre. Mr. Addams, as addicts of the *New Yorker* know, specialises in jokes about suicide, murder, cannibalism, octopuses, boa-constrictors, misers, ghosts and deformities. One of the most telling drawings has no caption; it shows a man ski-ing, the two parallel tracks behind him bulging a little to enclose a tree. Analysts of the comic sense may be recommended to consider why this is so effectively funny. The drawings are not in themselves very personal or distinguished, but the notions are uncommonly good. Like many of last year's *New Yorker* jokes, there is a good Addams about the tyre shortage: a miser gloating over a whole dingy atticful of tyres.

The Letters of Evelyn Underhill. Edited by CHARLES WILLIAMS. *Longmans.* 10s. 6d.

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No. 726

Set by W.R.

The usual prizes are offered for a serious poem on *Love Among the Ruins of London* in three stanzas of the same metre as *Love Among the Ruins*. For the benefit of competitors who have not a Browning at hand, here is one stanza :—

Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, January 10.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 723

Set by G. W. Stonier

We offer the usual prizes for the best telephone conversation with a wrong number.

Report by G. W. Stonier

The true conversations weren't funny, and the funny ones weren't, alas, quite funny enough. One recognises, with a twinge, some popular gambits.

"Is that Mr. Smith?"

"No, I'm afraid you have got the wrong number."

"Then what the devil did you answer for?"

No need for P. S. Ross, who records this, to assure us it happened. Or—within everyone's experience—there is the most simple of all openings, "Is that you?" from which a conversation may branch in almost any direction.

"Have you any kidneys to-day?" and "Is that the fountain-head?" and "I want the man in charge of the seals" were among the beginnings that quickly tailed off. On the whole, wilful misunderstandings—the determination, having got your wrong number, to stick to it—produced livelier results than the shots at Itma or Marx Brothers inconsequence. Prizes of one guinea to Richard Pomfret, and half a guinea each to Towanbucket and Jas. J. Nevin. Richard Pomfret's savage dressing-down of a guest will suggest new and therapeutical uses of the telephone.

FIRST PRIZE

Telephone Conversation with a Wrong Number

"Hello!"

"Yes?"

"Charles, I want you to listen to me. When you come to dinner on Friday, would you mind not airing your confounded views so blatantly——?"

"But——"

"Would you mind crediting us and our other guests with some slight perception, some knowledge of affairs, some views of our own, and some ability to state them——?"

"But this is——"

"Would you mind refraining from laughing uproariously at your own wit, and from trampling on that of others? Would you mind not *egling* your food?"

"I tell you, I'm——"

"And, finally, Charles, would you mind *going* at the time when it is perfectly obvious that you *ought* to be going? *Would* you, Charles?"

"I've been trying to tell you—whoever you are—that you've got the wrong number. I'm *not* Charles."

"Of course you're not Charles. I *knew* you weren't Charles."

"Then why shoot all this at me?"

"Because I am to invite Charles to dinner on Friday. I shall now dial again to get the real Charles. But first let me thank you. To have got that off my chest to somebody—*anybody*—is an almighty relief. Thank you, dear Charles-by-proxy."

RICHARD POMFRET

SECOND PRIZE

Mrs. Feather Gets a Wrong Number

"Hallo! Hallo! Is that Hammersmith nine five five nine? Mrs. Feather speaking. Listen, please . . . You are? Good! Well, now, have you any distemper? . . . Only a few light cases? . . . Get rid of it before you can say what? . . . Jack Robinson? Do I know him? . . . Just as you like; but it wasn't me that mentioned him: it was you . . . Anyhow, I'm not interested in your friends. Tell me, please: about this distemper. How many kinds have you got? . . . Only one! But there used to be fifty-seven varieties before the war . . . Well, perhaps I *am* thinking of soup. Never mind. What colour is your distemper? . . . Oh, no, not pink. I don't think my husband could bear pink . . . Spotty? I wouldn't like to have it spotty, either . . . Not likely to get it? Why ever not? I've as much right to it as anyone else, haven't I? . . . Certainly I want it, if you're got the right colour. It's for my husband's study, and I'm sure he wouldn't like looking at pink spots all day . . . No, he's not a doctor. Edgar travels in wine and spirits . . . Why should he be used to seeing pink spots? . . . Now, do please stop all this airy camouflage and get down to brass knobs. Listen: have you any really nice, rich, grass-green distemper? . . . Well, you needn't sound so pleased about it. It's surely nothing to thank heaven for . . . Seriously? Have I been funny? Now, look here, young man, are you Dabble or Splash? . . . All wet? Me? . . . Well, who are you, then? . . . The Hammersmith Dogs' Home? Now, isn't that tiresome. I do think you might have said so at first. Please ring yourself out—I mean, ring off . . ."

TOWANBUCKET

THE WRONG NUMBER

"Number please."

"Double three, one, double two."

"Double two, one, double three?"

"Yes—Is that Mike Howe?"

"I beg your pardon, but what did you say?"

"Is that Mike Howe?"

"Your cow—what do you mean?"

"Can't you understand plain English?"

"I wouldn't be in this job if I didn't. Who do you want to speak to?"

"I've told you twice already—Mike Howe."

"You'd better try the Cattle Market Exchange. This is not a cowshed."

"I don't want the Cattle Market Exchange, nor any of your cheek either."

"Try the Butchers' Temperance Institute, or the Farmers' Abstinence Club."

"Don't try to be funny, Miss. I've asked for Mike Howe and I want Mike Howe."

"Well, we have not got your cow. If it has strayed you should get in touch with the police. Good morning."

JAS J. NEVIN

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